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Prabuddha Bharata

OR

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By Karma, Jnana, Bhakti, and Yoga, by one or more or all of these the Vision of the Paramatman is Obtained.

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Prabuddha Bharata

VOL 91 SEPTEMBER 1986 No. 9

Arise! Awake! And stop not till the Goal is reached.

INTEGRAL VISION OF VEDIC SEERS*

'Truth is one: sages call It by various names'

सहृदयं सांमनस्यमविद्वषं कृणोमि वः ।
अन्यो अन्यमभि हर्यत वत्सं जातमिवाघ्न्या ॥

I make you of one heart and one mind, devoid of hate. Love one another, as a cow loves her new-born calf.

Atharva-Veda 3.30.1

अनुव्रतः पितुः पुत्रो मात्रा भवतु संमनाः ।
जाया पत्ये मधुमतीं वाचं वदतु शन्तिवाम् ॥

Let the son be obedient to his father and be of one mind with his mother. Let the wife speak sweet and gentle words to her husband.

Atharva-Veda 3.30.2

मा भ्राता भ्रातरं द्विक्षन्मा स्वसारमुत स्वसा ।
सम्यञ्चः सव्रता भूत्वा वाचं वदत भद्रया ॥

Brother should not hate brother, sister should not hate sister. Let all of you work together with a common purpose, and talk what is beneficial to all.

Atharva-Veda 3.30.3

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* Another Atharva-vedic hymn the *Sammanasya-suktam*, reminiscent of the teacher's instructions to the student in the *Taittirīyopaniṣad* 1.11.1, is begun here. This beautiful hymn, which stresses the need for love and harmony in family life, is chanted during the *upākarma* ceremonies of the twice-born.

ABOUT THIS ISSUE

This month's EDITORIAL deals with the means of attaining inner freedom.

In WILLIAM JAMES AND SWAMI VIVEKANANDA: ASIAN PSYCHOLOGY AT HARVARD IN THE 1890s Dr. Eugene Taylor explores the background to the meeting of the two great minds—Swami Vivekananda and William James, the distinguished pragmatist philosopher and psychologist. The article is the transcript of a talk delivered by Dr. Taylor who is currently Associate in Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School, and Consultant in Psychiatry, at the Massachusetts General Hospital.

Are the 'deities' of the Vedas personifications of natural powers ? Or are they symbols of the spiritual truths of the inner world ? These questions are answered by Dr. Ardhendu Sekhar Ghosh, D. Sc., in VEDIC SYMBOLISM. The author who did his doctoral research at Sorbonne, worked for some time under Irene and Joliot Curie in Paris, and retired as Senior Scientist at Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, Bombay.

In GANDHISM IN PERSPECTIVE: POLITICS AS PHILOSOPHY AND CULTURE Dr. Anil Baran Ray M.A., Ph. D (Columbia) touches upon some of the unique features of Mahatma Gandhi's ideology. The author is Professor of Political Science, University of Burdwan, West Bengal.

BONDAGE AND FREEDOM

(EDITORIAL)

The archetypal image of freedom

One evening in late autumn a stout greenish yellow caterpillar with decorative eyespots and a horn-like spur at each end came crawling out of the Mayavati forest into this editorial office. After nosing around a bit it made straight for one corner of the room and ensconced itself comfortably there for the night. Next morning in the same corner there was instead of the worm a fluffy ball of golden silk which it had obviously woven around itself during the night. And there it remained all through the winter, unnoticed, unaffected by the snow-falls, hailstorms and rain that were changing the outside world. One fine morning in early spring the ball of silk was found to be empty with a big hole in it, and there was a large beautiful yellow tusser moth sunning against the window-pane. When the window was opened, the angelic creature gently flapped its iridescent wings and glided away into the golden rays of the sun which were filtering in through the mist. Under our very eyes, but mostly concealed from our vision, one of the marvellous acts of Life had been performed.

When understood properly, every event in nature has a symbolic significance. For every event in the universe is in some way an approximation to the archetypal process of being, becoming and liberation. This is what, at the gross physical level, the Second Law of Thermodynamics represents: energy builds up, does work and is then lost for ever in the vastness of space. Life too, when viewed as a whole, is no exception to this law. Universal life consists of countless millions of individual life-cycles,

like that of the tusser moth for instance. The tusser moth begins its life as a leaf-eating larva, then spins a cocoon for itself within which it undergoes a radical transformation, and finally emerges as the free-flying imago. But the freedom of the tusser moth is limited and short-lived. The essence of its being is drawn back into the life stream and the whole life-cycle is repeated all over again, endlessly. Therefore the tusser moth does not fulfil completely the ultimate purpose of creation; and this is true of all living beings. Except man. Man is born as a child, grows and works and impelled by his inner impulses, spins the threads of bondage by which he binds himself. But then, he reflects, meditates, transforms his consciousness, breaks his bonds, and his radiant soul wings its way to the Supreme Self—never to be pulled back into the life stream again. This is of course true of only the ideal man; the rest of mankind go on struggling in bondage and repeating the cycle. But every man carries deep in his unconscious the archetypal image of the free soul.

It is this archetypal image of freedom that gives man an acute sense of bondage. If an animal is free to roam wherever it pleases, it will not feel bondage. But man, in spite of having all the freedom he needs to move about and enjoy life, still has a constant sense of bondage. It is upon the nature of his understanding of this bondage and the way he struggles to attain freedom that a person's character and destiny depend.

The wheel of bondage

In Shakespeare's *King Lear* the king tells his virtuous youngest daughter:

Thou art a soul in bliss; but I am bound
Upon a wheel of fire, that mine own tears
Do scald like molten lead.

Here the 'wheel of fire' refers to the wheel of Ixion. Greek mythology narrates how Ixion, king of the Lapithae, committed a serious offence, and when nobody would purify him of this sin, Zeus carried him up to heaven. But Ixion tried to deceive Zeus himself and, as a punishment, was tied to a perpetually revolving wheel of fire in the infernal regions. Crime, guilt, sin and punishment—these constitute the wheel of Ixion which obviously represents the state of moral bondage in which quite a big section of humanity lives. In ancient Greece the followers of the Orphic cult conceived human existence as a series of rebirths constituting 'the sorrowful weary wheel'.

The Upaniṣads speak of the whole universe as a huge wheel, the wheel of Brahmā (*brahmacakra*), with the individual self, symbolized as a swan (*haṁsa*), tied to this ever-revolving wheel.[1] According to this view, life itself is a state of bondage —not only the present life but also the after-life. All the three worlds—*bhuḥ* (earth), *bhuvaḥ* (world of the *pitṛ* or manes) and *svaḥ* (heaven or the world of *karma-devas*)—are included in the wheel of Brahmā.

Vyāsa in his commentary on Patañjali's Yoga Aphorisms, speaks of the 'six-spoked wheel of transmigratory existence' (*ṣaḍaram saṁsāracakram*). The six spokes are: *dharma* and *adharma* (virtue and vice), *sukha* and *duḥkha* (happiness and sorrow) and *rāga* and *dveṣa* (attachment and repulsion). Good actions lead to happiness and bad actions lead to suffering; happiness leads to attachment and suffering leads to repulsion, which in turn produce good and bad actions, respectively—the whole series thus constituting a cycle, the wheel of transmigratory existence. The hub of this

1. सर्वाजीवे सर्वसंस्थे बृहन्ते
अस्मिन् हंसो भ्राम्यते ब्रह्मचक्रे ।
Svetasvatara Upanisad 1.6

wheel is *avidyā*, ignorance of the real nature of the self.[2]

The surggle for freedom

What adds poignancy to life is not man's state of bondage—which in itself is not such a difficult problem—but his ignorance of the true nature of bondage and freedom. Very often a state of bondage is mistaken for true freedom and, by striving for wrong types of freedom, people only strengthen their bondage. The Gita says that in order to understand the true nature of bondage and freedom one must have a *sāttvic buddhi*.[3] Sri Ramakrishna has spoken of four classes of people—the ever-free, liberated souls, seekers of liberation and bound souls—and has given the following illustration:

Suppose a net has been cast into a lake to catch fish. Some fish are so clever that they are never caught in the net. They are like the ever-free. But most of the fish are entangled in the net. Some of them try to free themselves from it, and they are like those who seek liberation. But not all the fish that struggle succeed. A very few do jump out of the net, making a big splash in the water. Then the fishermen shout, 'Look! there goes a big one!' But most of the fish caught in the net cannot escape, nor do they make any effort to get out. On the contrary, they burrow into the mud with the net in their mouths and lie there quietly, thinking, 'We need not fear any more; we are quite safe here.' But the poor things do not know that the fishermen will drag them out with the net. These are like the men bound to the world.[4]

It is the struggle for ultimate freedom that distinguishes spiritual life from worldly life, known respectively as *nivṛtti* and *pravṛtti*. Struggle for freedom is seen in both the spiritual man and the worldly man but whereas the spiritual man seeks ultimate liberation, the worldly man seeks freedom to enjoy life. However, all those who turn to spiritual life are not necessarily seekers after liberation. As a matter of fact, in most spiritual aspirants true longing for ultimate liberation comes only at a somewhat advanced stage of spiritual progress[5] and, until this longing arises, spiritual life may not be so vastly different from worldly life as it appears to be.

It is the longing for liberation that makes even love for God meaningful. God is commonly described as the embodiment of perfection, beauty, love and happiness. But then, why is it so difficult to realize Him, to seek Him and even to have faith in Him? Lack of freedom is the only difficulty.

Liberation as the ultimate goal of life is one of the most fundamental characteristics of the Indian religious tradition which distinguish it from the Hebraic tradition. To understand the uniqueness of this doctrine it is necessary to know the conception of salvation in different religions.

Meaning of salvation

One of the important ideas shared by all religions is the view that man is in a dire situation and needs to be saved from that. The human predicament is, however, conceived in different ways in different religions. In Hinduism it is regarded as a state of bondage of the soul. The real self of man is the self-luminous, blissful, immortal spirit known as the Atman. Owing to primordial ignorance (*avidyā*) the soul, in some mysterious way, gets involved

2. Vyāsa, Commentary on *Yoga-sūtra* 4.11
3. Cf. *Gītā* 18.30.
4. *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* (New York: Ramakrishna Vivekananda Centre, 1942) pp. 86-87.

5. In Asvaghosa's *Visuddhi Magga* it is stated that true desire to escape from *samsara* arises only after an aspirant has passed through four stages including pseudo-nirvāṇa.

in matter, subtle and gross. The identification of the spirit with matter is the cause of suffering. The gross covering of the self is destroyed by death but the subtle body survives and is reborn in a new gross body resulting in a chain of births and deaths.

Buddhism rejects the notion of Atman as immortal spirit. According to the doctrine of dependent origination (*pratītya-samutpāda*) what appears as the self or ego is nothing but a combination (*saṁghāta*) of various elements which are a part of the universal 'chain of causation' and flux. This combination is born again and again in accordance with the Law of Karma. Buddha considered this state of human existence *duḥkha* (suffering).

Christianity conceives human existence as a state of damnation by which is meant sin and exile from paradise. The 'original sin' of disobedience to God committed by Adam and Eve is shared by all humanity, and hence the natural tendency of every man is to do evil. Thus on the one hand man has to bear the burden of a guilty conscience and, on the other, he is separated from God. Christianity does not believe in rebirth.

In Judaism and Islam man's present condition is regarded neither as bondage nor as damnation; it is simply the normal state of affairs in the inscrutable plan of God.

Whatever be their conception of man's present state of existence, all the world religions are unanimous in holding that man can be saved from it This process of 'saving' man is known as salvation. The Latin word *salvatio* is derived from *salus* which means health and the Greek word *soteria* is derived from *sos* which means 'safe'. Thus salvation refers to a state of existence in which the soul remains whole, immortal and in supreme peace. This state of blessedness has been described in different ways.

Since Hinduism believes in bondage, it conceives salvation as freedom, *mukti*. According to some schools of Hindu thought, *mukti* can be obtained through man's own effort, whereas according to Bhakti schools God alone can liberate man. In this state of freedom the Atman shines in its own glory and blissfullness.

The Buddhist term for salvation is Nirvāṇa. Though it is often translated as 'deliverance', what it really means is the cessation or extinction of suffering.

In Christianity salvation is known as redemption. Through his death on the cross Christ atoned for humanity, brought about a 'reconciliation' between the Father and human beings (some Christian theologians, including St. Augustine, regard Christ's death as ransom paid to the Devil) and has thus redeemed man from the 'original sin'. The redeemed soul returns to heaven and experiences the Beatific Vision of God for ever. Since Christian theologians regard the body and soul as inseparable, they speak of the 'resurrection' of the body with the soul (after death or after the Last Judgement) rather than of soul's immortality.

Judaism and Islam also believe in resurrection but reject the need for an Incarnation as the redeemer of souls, individual atonement being regarded as sufficient means for the remission of sins.

What kind of experience does salvation represent? According to all religions, it is a state of supreme peace. However, Hinduism regards it as a state of pure 'being' in which the Self remains in its true original nature, whereas Buddhism regards it as a state of absolute 'non-being' (*śūnya*), and the Judeo-Christian and Islamic traditions regard it as 'participation' in the ceaseless act of divine Love. Being, non-being, participation—these are the three descriptions of salvational experience given by world religions. They all negate

the endless struggle of 'becoming' which characterizes worldly life.[6]

Next we have to consider the means for the attainment of salvation. What are the conditions under which salvation is obtained? Here again the position of Hinduism is unique, for it alone insists on direct immediate ('mystic') experience of the transcendental Self or Atman as the only means of obtaining *mukti*. Even those schools which hold divine grace as essential for liberation concede that the salvific function of grace is to reveal to man his true nature, and mukti follows as a consequence of this experience.

No other religious tradition insists on direct experience as the only condition of salvation. In all other religions moral life and faith in God are enough to achieve salvation. Christianity holds membership in a Church as an additional condition for salvation. In Theravada Buddhism strict observance of moral principles is regarded as almost wholly sufficient for the attainment of salvation. Mahayana Buddhism, on the other hand, emphasizes meditation and some kind of transcendent experience. Of course, every religion either dogmatically asserts or tacitly implies that salvation is possible only for its own followers.[7]

So then, the three distinctive features of the Hindu conception of salvation are: 1. its nature as freedom from bondage; 2. its experience as pure being; 3. its insistence on direct transcendental experience as the ultimate means of salvation.

Mukti in comparison with other forms of salvation

Direct realization of the higher Self requires not only the strict observance of moral virtues as a precondition but also the transformation and transcendence of ordinary consciousness. Does this not, then, imply that *mukti* (or *mokṣa*) refers to a higher state of existence than the other forms of salvation? Indeed it does.

Even in Hinduism all schools do not hold the same view on liberation. The highest view is that held by Advaita Vedanta. According to this school, *mokṣa* is the restoration of the self to its true state of non-differentiation from Brahman, the Supreme Self. In this state of non-duality there is no difference between the subject and the object or between qualities and the qualified. It is not a state to be acquired but to be discovered. The same self endures all through the process of discovery and so the final experience is not different from that of the Self. Hence it is stated in Advaita treatises: 'The unknown Brahman is the object of enquiry, and the known Brahman is the result.'[8] The effort to realize the Supreme Self is nothing more than the removal of the obstacles to that realization and, as soon as the obstacles are removed, the Supreme Self reveals itself. That is why Śaṁkara has repeatedly insisted in his commentaries that *mokṣa* is not the result of a process (*sādhya*) but an ever-attained (*nitya siddha*) fact of experience. It is a state of absoluteness unconditioned by anything. He argues that even a higher experience produced by meditation, which is only a special kind of mental activity, is a subjective experience and has no absolute validity. Non-dual experience is independent of everything.[9]

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6. The Vaiṣṇava experience of salvation is more a 'participation' than pure 'being'.

7. For a clear presentation of the concepts of salvation in different religions see, Charles S. Braden, *Man's Quest for Salvation* (Chicago: Villet Clark and Co, 1941)

8. अज्ञातं ब्रह्म विषयः, ज्ञातं ब्रह्म प्रयोजनम् ।

9. ध्यानं चिन्तनं यद्यपि मानसं तथापि पुरुषेण कर्तुमकर्तुमन्यथा वा कर्तुं शक्यं, पुरुषतन्त्रत्वात् । ज्ञानं तु प्रमाणजन्यं, प्रमाणं च यथाभूतविषयज्ञापकम् ।

The direct realization of this absolute state is known as *sadyomukti*; it is the highest state of existence ever conceivable.[10] Advaitins, however, admit of the possibility of another kind of liberation. Brahman conditioned by Maya appears as the Hiraṇyagarbha or Cosmic Soul. Through meditation on and devotion to the Deity it is possible to attain cosmic consciousness and to reach the world of Personal God after death. This in itself is a liberated state; according to Advaitins this is the type of *mukti* promised by Rāmānuja, Madhva and other teachers of dualism. However, according to Advaitins, this is not the final state of liberation. After aeons of time Hiraṇyagarbha, along with all those souls who have attained unity with him, will merge in the absolute Brahman This indirect or 'gradual' liberation is called *kramamukti.*

Seen from the Advaitic stand-point, the other conceptions of salvation too fall into an overall pattern. Heaven as described in popular Christian literature can be nothing higher than *svarga* (known also as *svaḥ*) which along with the world of manes (*bhuvaḥ*) and the earth (*bhuḥ*) constitutes the Virāṭ, Cosmic Body or universal Life—the wheel of *saṁsāra* already referred to. Only the great Christian mystics who gained unitive experience may be said to have attained the world of Hiraṇyagarbha and to have escaped from the cosmic wheel.

As regards the Islamic conception of salvation, the Qur'ān itself mentions two kinds of heaven: *pardosh* and *ridwan*.[11] Of these *pardosh* with its sensual pleasures can correspond at best only to *svarga. Riḍwan*, described mostly by Sufi mystics, may be said to correspond to the world of Hiraṇyagarbha.

The exact nature of Buddhist Nirvāṇa is in dispute. The Theravada conception of it, as a state attainable chiefly through moral discipline is not very high. The Mahayana conception is higher but, from the stand-point of Advaita, since the Buddhists do not believe in the existence of a transcendent Self, Nirvāṇa is devoid of true Self-knowledge and is nothing but the experience of the dissolution of the constituent elements of the personality. Yoga books speak of the possibility of remaining absorbed in Prakṛti, the unmanifested (*avyakta*) causal base of the universe. It is a kind of samādhi without full knowledge of the Atman, lasting millions of years, and attained through intense renunciation and disgust for worldly life. Such a state of existence is called *prakṛtilaya*[12]; from the Vedantic view-point this is what Nirvāṇa amounts to. According to Vedanta, this is not the final state of liberation, for those who attain it will be reborn when a new *sṛṣṭi* (creation) begins after cosmic dissolution (*pralaya*).

Two important aspects of the Advaitic view of salvation deserve attention. First, it admits the validity of all other conceptions of salvation; only it regards them as lower.

अतो ज्ञानं कर्तुमकर्तुमन्यथा वा कर्तुम अशक्यं, केवलं वस्तुतन्त्रमेव तत्। न चोदनातन्त्रम्। नापि पुरुषतन्त्रम्। तस्मान्मानसत्वेऽपि ज्ञानस्य महद्-वैलक्षण्यम्।

Samkara, Commentary on *Brahma-Sutra* 1.1.4.

10. Since *mokṣa* is a form of knowledge, the majority of Advaitins believe that it is possible to have it even during earthly existence; this is known as *jīvanmukti*, liberation-while-living. A few others, however, maintain that true liberation takes place only after death; this is known as *videhamukti*. Buddhism makes a similar distinction between *nirvāṇa* and *parinirvāṇa*. In all other religious traditions (including Bhakti Schools in Hinduism) salvation is strictly an eschatological affair.

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11. *Qur'ān* 9.72. cf. Martin Lings, *Sufism* p. 41.

12. भवप्रत्ययो विदेहप्रकृतिलयानाम्

Patañjali, *Yoga-Sūtra* 1.19. See Vācaspati's gloss on this sūtra.

Second, the Advaitic view alone permits a state of existence which is completely free from the influence of time.

The Advaitic view may be the highest, but this does not necessarily mean that it is the best for all people. Let everyone follow the path of salvation that he thinks is the best for him.

Experience of freedom

What is really important is to introduce an element of freedom into our day-to-day life. How long will we live as slaves to lust and greed and hate and fear? Some day we must become free. If so, why not now? We are so much accustomed to living in bondage that we do not really desire or strive for freedom. This tendency is illustrated by the story of the Chinese prisoner who had been sentenced to life imprisonment. After sixty years when he was released on the coronation of a new emperor, the man found the prospect of living free in the world intolerable. He therefore begged the jail authorities to let him spend the remaining part of his life also in imprisonment.

The story of the enlightened queen Madālasā narrated in the Purāṇas offers a striking contrast. She was as wise as she was beautiful and was married to a king named Ṛtadhvaja who had earlier rescued her from the clutches of a demon. Owing to her past merits, Madālasā was blessed with divine knowledge and knew of the illusoriness of the world and the immortality and glory of the Atman. While rocking her babies in the cradle, she would sing Vedantic hymns as a lullaby the burden of which was: 'Thou art the pure, awakened, stainless Self free of the Maya of transmigratory existence'.[13] She taught her children Vedantic truths and trained them how to live free of all entanglements. One after the other the first three sons when they grew up renounced the world, practised spiritual disciplines in hermitages and attained spiritual illumination. At the king's request, the fourth son, Alarka, was brought up differently. When he came of age he was crowned king, and Ṛtadhvaja and Madālasā repaired to the Ashrama of Dattatreya. After ruling the country wisely for several years Alarka too renounced the kingdom and sought spiritual enlightenment, for so powerful was the ambience of freedom in which he had grown up that he couldn't stand the bondage of kingly duties for too long.

The truth is this: in order to seek true freedom we must have an experience of true freedom. It is only when we experience great peace and strength through inner freedom will we seek the highest spiritual freedom. Only then will we understand the true nature of bondage.

Sources of bondage

It is a rather paradoxical fact that for the attainment of true spiritual freedom, a certain dagree of restriction is necessary as a precondition. Just as a person who seeks too much pleasure will miss true happiness (this is known as the 'hedonistic paradox') so also a person who seeks too much freedom at the lower level will miss true liberation. First of all, a fixed external point is necessary to give leverage to inner freedom. This fixed point may be the cloister in the case of a monk or the hearth in the case of a housewife. Those who condemn household chores or work in a factory or office as drudgery would do well to remember the life of Hui-neng (638-713) the Sixth Patriarch of Zen (Cha'n in Chinese). When as an uneducated pedlar of firewood he joined the Tung Monastery

13. शुद्धोऽसि बुद्धोऽसि निरञ्जनोऽसि ।
संसारमायापरिवर्जितोऽसि ॥

in northern China, he was assigned the task of grinding corn in a neglected corner. This humble work in which he was engaged for many years transformed his consciousness and he became the greatest teacher of Zen.

Still more important is the need for a stable inner milieu. A restless mind which is constantly assailed by instinctual drives, feelings, images, ideas, plans and opinions is a great obstacle to the attainment of inner freedom. So one of the first steps to achieving inner freedom is to establish order, integration and stability in the mind. Goal-orientation, a clear-cut philosophy of life, a definite routine, study of scriptures, meditation, japa and ego-encountering at fixed times are very helpful aids. When the mind is stable and calm, it becomes easier to understand and deal with the sources of bondage which are hidden in the depths of consciousness.

All schools of Vedanta hold that in its real nature the self of man is ever-free, self-luminous and blissful and that the original, primordial cause of bondage is *avidyā* or ignorance. In Advaita Vedanta ignorance is conceived as a veil covering the light of the Self. In other schools of Vedanta ignorance is conceived as a restriction of the powers inherent in the soul caused by wrong karma.[14] According to the former, ignorance can be removed only through knowledge; according to the latter, the restrictions can be removed through good karma, meditation (*upāsanā*) and divine grace.

The chief bonds of the soul are two: egoism and *saṁskāras*. Egoism is the identification of the Self with instinctual drives and images which are produced by *saṁskāras*, the latent impressions in the mind of past experiences and actions. The first step in the attainment of inner freedom is to prevent bad *saṁskāras* from producing bad impulses like lust, greed and hate. This can be achieved by acquiring good saṁskāras through virtuous actions. Good saṁskāras keep bad saṁskāras under control and, when this happens, a person attains what is called 'moral freedom'. Higher than this is 'spiritual freedom' in which one transcends both virtue and vice and realizes himself as the pure, self-luminous Atman. Spiritual freedom can be obtained only by deactivating the saṁskāras and by eliminating *avidyā*, the primordial tendency of the Self to identify itself with its limiting adjuncts; both these processes require a radical transformation of consciousness.

Two types of freedom

We have spoken of two types of freedom. Moral freedom is freedom from feelings of guilt, regret and evil tendencies—that is, from the hold of the past. It is liberation from the Wheel of Ixion which we discussed earlier. Spiritual freedom is liberation form the past, the present and the future. It is liberation from the 'six-spoked wheel of transmigratory existence'. When *avidyā*, which forms the hub of this wheel, is destroyed, the whole wheel breaks up liberating the Self.

It cannot be denied that Indian culture has, right from the period of the Upaniṣads, overemphasized spiritual freedom and this has resulted in a noticeable loss of moral vigour in social life. On the other hand, western culture has focused its attention on morality. This has given to western society greater moral vigour and social

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14. The most elaborate analysis of bondage is found in Śaiva and Tantric systems. There bondage is depicted as five *kañcukas* or strait-jackets each of which restricts one aspect of the soul's existence. The five *kañcukas* are: *kalā* (reduction of will-power), *vidyā* (reduction of knowledge), *rāga* (reduction of joy), *kāla* (restriction in time), *niyati* (restriction in space).

justice. However, it has not given peace of mind to the people in the West. What is the cause of this? The answer is to be sought in the inadequacies of Christian theology. Christian ethics does not allow real moral freedom. It makes every human choice or act a moral confrontation between man and God. These endless human-divine conflicts only intensify the individual and social conflicts which already exist. The present growing popularity of Buddhism in the West may be seen partly as a reaction to such outdated Christian trends as 'crisis theology' developed by Karl Barth and Reinhold Niebuhr.[15] According to Buddha, moral problems are purely psychological problems and through self-knowledge man can attain moral freedom. In Vedantic life too morality (*dharma*) is dealt with at individual and social levels, and man's quest for God has the liberation of the spirit as its chief aim. The prayer of the Upaniṣadic sage is: 'Seeking liberation, I take refuge in the Supreme Spirit whose light illumines the intellect and who imparts supreme knowledge to the Creator (Brahma) after projecting him.'[16]

Moral freedom gives peace of mind. By freeing their minds from lust and greed and hate and jealousy and fear and pride, let people attain peace of mind first. The question of spiritual freedom will become meaningful only then.

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15. In spite of a new Marxist inspired theological trend now gaining strength in Latin American countries, Catholic and Protestant churches are yet to develop a true 'liberation theology' for moral liberation or spiritual liberation.

16. यो ब्रह्माणं विदधाति पूर्वं
यो वै वेदांश्च प्रहिणोति तस्मै ।
तं ह देवमात्मबुद्धिप्रकाशं
मुमुक्षुर्वै शरणमहं प्रपद्ये ॥
Svetasvatara Upanisad 6.18

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND WILLIAM JAMES: ASIAN PSYCHOLOGY AT HARVARD IN THE 1890s*

DR. EUGENE TAYLOR

Ladies and Gentlemen. Welcome to the fourth lecture in an intermittent series that I have given over the years here at Harvard. The first talk was in 1977 at Harvard Divinity School, where I presented an address entitled 'Psychology of Religion and Asian Studies: The William James Legacy.' There I tried to point out that, although he is called the Father of American Psychology, if he is taught at all today, William James is usually taught as irrelevant to what constitutes the basis of scientific psychology in a modern, laboratory oriented, and statistical sense. However, if we look closely into his writings, we see a surprisingly sophisticated critique of the narrow biases of modern laboratory science, and also a very important statement that he made about religious experience, especially Asian thought, and its relation to the development of psychology as a person-centred science, which is actually something of a prophecy yet to be fulfilled.

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* Lecture delivered on 24 April 1985 at William James Hall, Harvard University.

I refined that statement a few years later, when, in 1983, I returned to Harvard Divinity School to become the William James Lecturer on the Varieties of Religious Experience, an annual endowed lectureship not to be confused with the William James Lectures that alternate each year between psychology and philosophy at Harvard. The major address I gave then was entitled 'On Psychology's True Contribution to the Religious Sphere' in which I attempted to articulate what James had to say about psychology's contribution to the development of an objective science of religions. Psychologists, he said, should study subconscious processes within individuals, across cultures and in different religious environments, and by so doing construct a comparative psychology of inner experience. This idea came from the basic theme of the *Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902); namely, that the doorway into profoundly transforming mystical experiences is through an exploration of the subconscious. The truths of these inner mystical experiences, however, can only be tested by their fruits for life. In other words, our beliefs become true by their effects on enhancing the aesthetic and moral qualities of day-to-day functioning in the outer world.

I was able to continue to develop some aspects of this idea in 1983, when we held a symposium at the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association on the dialogue between psychology and world religions. It was there that I first presented material on William James's meeting with Swami Vivekananda in 1896. Today, I would like to extend this statement on James and Vivekananda a little bit further, by considering a unique moment in the history of psychology at Harvard in the 1890s, some of the possible implications of that moment for the way we define psychology today, and its possible bearing on prevailing attitudes of legitimate science.

The problem as I see it is epitomized by a short article that recently appeared in *Isis*, the journal of the History of Science Society. The article, which was on science and technology in Indian culture, has enthusiastically announced that 'in order to develop a proper perspective' a recent program to study contributions in the history of science in India has been launched. The program is divided into four periods: Science in India from the earliest time to A.D. 1200; science and technology in Medieval India, A.D. 1200-1800; science in the colonial period; and science and technology since independence. This program is a noble and justified endeavour. I was particularly intrigued, however, by the statement of science in the earliest period in India as compared to the development of global science during the same period. The proposed questions for study suggest that there was a mainstream of world science that India made no contribution to, and was incapable of deriving any benefit from, owing to a decline in what is implied as legitimate forms of science and technology in that early period—a span of time which, of course, includes the composition of the Vedas, the time when the Upaniṣads flourished and Patañjali wrote the Yoga Sūtras. It was the time in India for the development of an inwardly oriented science, one that took as its goal not the conquest of natural forces in the material world but, rather, the control of consciousness and, through it, the transformation of personality. Since this is not considered science in the West, the questions posed for study in this *Isis* article to me, suggest several possible conclusions. For one thing, they may mean that Indian scientists themselves have rejected any notion of an inner science indigenous to their own culture. For another, they raise the question, 'Have the Indian scientists

thus taken on a more objective definition of reality, or have they simply become fascinated with the definition of science that has been the main product of cultural evolution in the West ?' A look at Asian psychology at Harvard in the 1890s suggests that the very concept of an inner science may have been more acceptable to psychologists then than it is today.

William James and Swami Vivekananda first met here at Harvard on March 25th, 1896. It was the occasion of Vivekananda's address before the Graduate Philosophical Society, where he was invited to speak on 'The Vedanta Philosophy.' The meeting was held on a Wednesday evening at 8:00 P.M., in Dane Hall, which used to stand at the present site of Emerson Hall, in quarters which then housed the psychological laboratory.[1] It may have been a bigger group than historians have suspected, for, in addition to two rooms full of tables and experimental apparatus, the Harvard Psychological Laboratory also accommodated a large lecture hall. In any case, it has been possible to identify at least a few of the distinguished collection of visitors, as we shall see.

But first, how did Vivekananda come to be there ? He had originally been raised in a well-to-do Indian family, had attended the University of Calcutta, and thus was familiar with the English system of education. After a period of youthful rebellion, during which time he joined the Brahmo Samaj, he became a disciple of the Indian spiritual teacher, Ramakrishna, and eventually became a monk. When Ramakrishna died, the spirit of what he was, the wealth of his inner experiences, and his spiritual lineage as it was represented in the history of Hinduism at that moment were bequeathed to Vivekananda, who was seen as his foremost disciple. Vivekananda banded together the other disciples of Ramakrishna to form a new monastic order. The young monks continued their religious practices under ascetic and austere circumstances—sometimes having to boil the greens growing on the walls of an abandoned monastery where they were staying in order to live—while they continued to spread Ramakrishna's teachings.

Gradually people began to help them so they could continue on with the process of spiritual development that is such an important ideal in Indian life. At the same time, the monks were able to inspire the householders to lead more moral, ethical, and religious lives and gain higher spiritual experience. There was one period when the group broke up and most of the members took to a mendicant, wandering life. Vivekananda travelled all over India as a *sannyāsin*. Having been drawn into the religious life from his earlier involvement in social reform movements, Vivekananda changed from a social radical, advocating only outward change, to a spiritual pilgrim who advocated change

1. The early history of the Harvard Psychological Laboratory remains at the centre of an on-going controversy. James had a demonstrational laboratory to go along with his lectures in physiological psychology as early as 1875. James also had facilities associated with the Lawrence Scientific School in the 1880s that were open to students taking his courses. James finally got enongh money, partly through the university and partly through private subscriptions, to officially open the Harvard Psychological Laboratory, which was outfitted with apparatus and a small library in Dane Hall. Wilhelm Wundt, however, has been given credit for founding the first experimental laboratory in psychology at Leipzig in 1879. After all, how could the experimentalists realistically give credit to James, who did not like laboratory work—he called it mere 'brass instrument psychology'—and whose psychology was tinged with not the pure Anglo-German science, but with traces of the French experimental psychology of the subconscious and the English psychical researchers. Wundt, consequently, has been given all the laurels.

through the inward transformation of personality. He heard about the World Parliament of Religions, and he determined through the counsel of friends and a series of his own inner experiences that he was to go and represent Hinduism. He travelled to America by way of Japan and Canada, until he made his way down to Chicago, the site of the Parliament. He was six weeks early; he had no credentials and little money, he was not an official delegate. He was then thirty years of age.

Someone told him that it would be cheaper to live in Boston during the waiting period. He managed the ticket on a train heading for the northeast, and on the way met Miss Katherine Sanborn. She was the daughter of Frank Sanborn, the famous social reformer who founded the American Social Science Association, and who was one of the younger members of Emerson's transcendentalist circle. Miss Sanborn befriended Vivekananda and took him to Breezy Meadows, the family farm near Holliston. As a guest in the Sanborn home, Vivekananda soon became the talk of the town—the oriental young man who rode around with Miss Sanborn in a carriage and wore strange robes and a turban. Soon the newspaperman discovered him; he was interviewed and his picture was in the papers. He attended local social gatherings, where he met all the big names. It was through the Sanborns, for instance, that he first met Thomas Wentworth Higginson, and also Professor John Henry Wright, Professor of Greek at Harvard. Wright had a friend on the board of the World Parliament, and he made arrangements for Vivekananda to get the proper credentials to attend it. Vivekananda then returned to Chicago, but when he got there, he found he had lost the address where he was to stay. He sat dejected on a curbside, when a young lady came out from a nearby house towards him. To his surprise she asked him if he was one of the delegates to the Parliament of Religions. He replied that he was, but did not know where to go, whereupon she took him into her house briefly and soon saw him to his destination. His life seemed to be full of similar synchronous events.

The great purpose of the World Parliament was to invite presentations by delegates from all world religious traditions. But one underlying motive that soon became evident was that all the funny people who came in strange garb from overseas were made to look like a carnival sideshow and, what was made to seem the most important was the Judeo-Christian tradition. In fact, the Christian missionaries and scholars who were there made no secret about their opinion of non-western religions. But there were some highly articulate delegates from these other religions, who refused to be intimidated.[2]

Most of the delegates had come with prepared texts to read. Vivekananda got up and just spoke from his heart. He was most eloquent and immediately captured

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2. Among these should be mentioned the Honorable Pung Kwang Yu, orthodox Confucianist, who was attached to the Chinese legation in Washington; Kinzai R.M. Hirai, a representative of Japanese Buddhism; Soyen Shaku, head of the Rinzai sect of Zen, whose paper had been translated by his young disciple, D.T. Suzuki, who, himself, was to become a translator of Buddhist texts in America for Paul Carus, editor of *The Monist.* Suzuki later became the foremost spokesman for the introduction of Zen in the West as a friend of Aldus Huxley and Alan Watts. There was also Angarika Dharmapala, who represented Theravada Buddhism. Coming from Ceylon, Dharmapala had close connections with the Theosophical Society, which was influential in helping to spread the message of Buddhism in America. These delegates, in particular, made an impression on the Parliament audience, spoke cogently on their respective traditions, and, with the exception of Soyen Shaku, had much to say about the encroachment of Christian missionaries in their native lands.

the attention of the entire audience. He talked to them first about the problem of Christian missionary activity in India—how the Christians came over to his country and thought the people there were heathens; how the Christian mission was to convert the natives, who were regarded as having no real culture; how the missionaries never took the time to learn the native languages, or the customs, beliefs, or interests of the people. Vivekananda then attempted to paint a much different picture, one that more accurately represented the breadth and grandeur of Indian culture. When he finished, he received a standing ovation and was mobbed by everyone, especially many women. The sponsors of the Parliament quickly realized that they had a real prize here, so they had Vivekananda speak last every day in order to make everyone keep their seats through all the other presentations.

The newspaper coverage was extensive, complete with pictures, quotations, and commentary; and soon, Vivekananda was heard about back in India. Afterwards, he signed with a lecture bureau and began a whirlwind tour around the United States. Of course, the great fear in all the local newspapers was that every time he arrived in a little town, the supposed effect of his talks was the conversion of the people to the heathen religion of Hinduism. His position, however, was that he endeavoured only to raise money to build schools, so that the people in India could make their own tradition flourish. Although from another country, Vivekananda fitted readily into a larger movement of interest in inner experience and character development that was at that time a conspicuous part of American folk culture, especially among the upper classes. From this strata of American society, he made many friends.

Vivekananda came to Harvard at least three times. He lectured at Radcliffe on one occasion. A year or two later he lectured in Sever Hall, but we have the most data on his meeting of March 25, 1896. By then he was in the middle of a systematic lecture tour around the East Coast, having spent a few days prior to his address in discussion with Harvard students; thus, he was known by many who came to hear him on that particular evening.

And what about William James's interest in things Asian? He may have had more exposure than most scholars suspect. He had a detailed knowledge of oriental influences on the transcendentalists, for instance, who had looked into Persian and Sanskrit poetry, read Sanskrit translations of the Upaniṣads, Bhagavad Gītā, Viṣṇu Purāṇa, and Laws of Manu, and had incorporated into their publication *The Dial*, French translations of the Confucian Analects and the Tao Te King. Emerson was attracted to Hindu monism, Thoreau was exposed to yoga, Alcott to the devotionalism of the Gītā. To the larger transcendentalist movement, James was, in a sense, heir, and in this context Asian ideas were not strange to him.

On the occasion of the death of his beloved cousin Minnie Temple—a young orphaned relative who had fascinated his whole family—James wrote an anguished eulogy in his diary that is often quoted by James scholars, but his exclamation at the very end, *tat tvam asi*, is always omitted. It means, 'That art thou', and is the answer given to young Śvetaketu by his father-teacher in the Upaniṣads as a formula indicating the oneness of the individual self with the cosmic Self. James was, of course, not a Vedantist; his exposure to this idea was probably through the Transcendentalists.

We also know that Emerson had introduced James to Hermann Grimm, and

while travelling in Europe, James had visited the Grimms' home and at their *dinner table* heard Wilhelm Dilthy expostulate on the history and spread of Buddhism in Asia. We have other examples, as well, of his use of Pali or Sanskrit terms sprinkled throughout his early philosophical writings. And we have a list of the volumes from the Eastern religion section of his personal library. While little more than a dozen in number, a few only are philosophical in nature. The rest are accounts of personal religious experiences within the context of Hindu, Chinese, and Japanese culture.

By the time Vivekananda spoke at Harvard in 1896, William James was at the height of his career, best known for his monumental two-volume *Principles of Psychology* (1890), which had virtually put psychology on the map as a scientific discipline. He was one of the first to teach psychology in the context of physiology in the 1870s, and by the time of his *Principles*, he found himself somewhat erroneously labelled as one of the foremost exponents of positivism and the scientific laboratory method. But he was not a laboratory man ; in fact, he hated laboratory work and could not imagine himself spending a life hunched over a bench taking measurements, looking through a microscope, or dissecting frogs. Frogs were the main object of laboratory study back then. Later it became chicks, then rats, and now, of course, it is computers. Only occasionally have experimental psychologists studied people. For James, people were the primary concern. The issue for James was that science had to address the entire spectrum of human experience if it was going to continue as a legitimate force, and to evolve and mature. The trend, however, was for scientists in psychology to define their purview by cutting off and discarding portions of human experience that could not be measured. and this is still the case today.

Anyway, after the publication of his *Principles* in 1890, which linked the study of consciousness to brain neurophysiology, James turned his attention to problems in experimental psychopathology and psychical research. Throughout the decade of the 1890s he was deeply involved in studying subconscious processes through hypnosis, crystal gazing and automatic writing. He reviewed an extensive literature on psychotherapeutics in the English and European languages, particularly focusing on the so-called French experimental psychology of the subconscious propounded by Theodule Ribot, Charles Richet, Alfred Binet, Jean Charcot, Pierre Janet, and Hippolyte Bernheim, and the work of the English psychical researchers, such as F.W.H. Meyers and Edmund Gurney. James read in the Italian and German literature as well. He was the first to introduce the psychotherapeutic work of Joseph Breuer and Sigmund Freud to the American psychological public during this period. While it is true that during the 1890s James's formal philosophy was emerging, which we see in the publication of his *Will to Believe* in 1897 and his first enunciation of Peirce's pragmatism in 1898, there can be little doubt that his primary focus, as depicted in his 1896 Lowell Lectures on Exceptional Mental States (Taylor, 1982) was the experimental study of inner experience. It was within this context that he was probably most attracted to Vivekananda's ideas on inner exploration and self-knowledge.

And who were the others that were probably present that night when Vivekananda spoke ? First of all, we know that Charles Carroll Everett was there. He was Dean of the Divinity School at the time, and it was he who introduced Vivekananda. Everett was then teaching comparative

religion in the Divinity School and courses in the psychology of religion in the Philosophy Department. His lecture notes for these courses, still preserved in the Harvard University Archives, show a sophisticated understanding of non-western religions perhaps equal to what Harvard students are taught today. In addition, Everett had known James probably all his academic life. He had been an early member of the Cambridge Metaphysical Club, when it met in the 1870s alternately at the homes of William James and C.S. Peirce, out of which grew the American philosophical movement of Pragmatism. Everett, too, in certain respects saw himself as an inheritor of the transcendentalist legacy, which also linked him to James in an important way.

A long-time colleague of both Everett and James who was no doubt present at Vivekananda's talk was Crawford Howell Toy, professor of oriental languages and also a founder of the History of Religions Club at Harvard. We know from the late Mrs. Robert Cushman, who was Charles Rockwell Lanman's daughter and eleven years old when James died, that James used to attend meetings of the History of Religions Club, and this is one way in which James had access to current scholarship in the comparative history of world religions. We know from other sources that the James and Toy families had known each other at least from the late 1870s.

Another who was present, we know from his appointment book, was Charles Rockwell Lanman, professor of Sanskrit at the university and editor of the Harvard Oriental Series. Lanman was a junior colleague of James's and looked up to him with great devotion. When they built their house, the Lanmans patterned it after the James's which was just up the street. We know that the families interacted frequently. Mrs. Cushman said that James's son Alec would come down to the Lanman house almost daily to hide under the tables and jump out to scare people and tell jokes, or else he would chase off the family dog by pulling its tail.

Unfortunately, one who was not there was James Haughton Woods, as he was in Leipzig working on his doctorate. He would soon return to Harvard, however, to teach anthropology, but then at James's urging take up the study of Indian philosophy. Woods returned to Europe to study with Paul Deussen, the Vedanta scholar, and when he came back to Harvard, he became a major figure as an Orientalist. He translated the *Yoga Sūtras* of Patañjali for Lanman's Harvard Oriental Series, and his personal library has been preserved intact by the Sanskrit Department. In a recent major work on the rise of American philosophy at Harvard, the claim is made that Woods never did anything important for Western philosophy and for this reason the author says he is to be discounted. Here again is a case where a historian trained only in the western tradition cannot conceive that anything of value could come from a study of the Asian philosophical systems.

Josiah Royce, on the other hand, was present to hear Vivekananda. Royce had come to Harvard in 1882 as a temporary replacement when James went abroad. It was during that trip that James had been so coolly received by Wundt in Germany, but embraced by the psychical researchers in England. Emerson had died while James was abroad, and while hearing Charcot lecture on hypnosis at the Salpêtrière, James received news that his own father was slipping away. The trip was significant in more ways than one. In any event, James returned and arranged for Royce to stay on permanently. At the time Vivekananda lectured, Royce had

recently been made a full professor in the History of philosophy. He was the great philosophical monist, as compared to James, the pluralist. James always used to tell Royce that the reason he was a pluralist was that monism could always be one of his options, whereas Royce never had that choice.

Royce had been educated at the University of California at Berkeley and then took his doctorate at Johns Hopkins in Baltimore. He afterward went abroad to Leipzig, where he studied logic (with Wundt), and among other subjects such as anthropology, studied Sanskrit grammar. As one of the most complete grammars known, Sanskrit could not but have significnatly effected Royce's later interest in the logic of science and language. His seminars on this topic were quite famous between 1900 and 1916 at Harvard, although his main focus was how philosophy contributes to an understanding of Christian religious experience. So he was interested in eastern ideas from the standpoint of character development, and must have found many points of agreement between his own inclinations and the views on Vedanta presented by Vivekananda.

We do not know if George Herbert Palmer attended, nor do we have any clues as to the whereabouts that evening of George Santayana, both professors in the Philosophy Department. Palmer, an avowed Hegalian, had inherited Fracis Bowen's chair in philosophy and taught what was called self-realization ethics at Harvard. It is perhaps not entirely true that he was a Hegalian, for he also praised Kant as a 'great liberator', and from these sources retailed to the Harvard undergraduates the German moral philosophy which stressed that goodness lay in the increasing growth of the individual's real self. One would think there was a natural attraction to the ideals of Vedanta here, but the nineteenth century thinkers interpreted German philosophy as the source and not the derivative of ultimate truth, and while it is true that there was a German Sanskrit tradition, it was not reflected in the American interpretation of either Kant or Hegel. Thus, Palmer probably stayed away.

For certain obvious reasons, one would expect the young George Santayana to have been there, as his philosophy was most noted for its contemplative absorption. Yet it was derived not from religious sources, nor from intense inward spiritual practice, but from existential reflection on his own inner experience. His early life had been tragic, and this was reflected in his philosophy. Vivekananda's optimism would probably not have appealed to him.

One other whom we know was not there was Hugo Münsterberg, professor of experimental psychology and director of the Harvard Psychological Laboratory, where Vivekananda's lecture took place. Münsterberg had been a student of Wilhelm Wundt in Leipzig and distinguished himself later as Wundt's rival in experimental laboratory psychology. He also held the M.D. in addition to the Ph D., and for these reasons, James lured Münsterberg to Harvard in 1892, not only to take over graduate instruction in experimental methods, but also to support James's own interests in experimental psychopathology. Again, trained in the context of nineteenth century German philosophy, Münsterberg would have had little interest in Vivekananda's ideas. In any case, Münsterberg had returned to Germany for a two year stay from 1894 to 1896, to decide if he should return to Harvard permanently; thus he was absent from Vivekananda's lecture.

Three graduate students who might have been there were Mary Whiton Calkins, Boris Sidis, and a somewhat eccentric

Radcliffe student who had been taking all of James's courses at the time, Gertrude Stein. Calkins studied for the Ph. D. in psychology under James and Royce but was not allowed the degree because Harvard did not award degrees of any kind to women then. Nevertheless, Calkins was an active member of the Department, teaching at the same time at Wellesley College, where she had then recently founded the first psychological laboratory. Her first and most enduring contribution to the professional literature was an analysis of different concepts of the self then prevailing in philosophy, a topic which Vivekananda spoke directly to in his address. Sidis, a Russian jew, was at that time James's foremost graduate student in psychopathology, with a deep interest in all aspects of subconscious processes and a sensitivity for the religious dimension of inner experience. He would have been sceptical of Vivekananda's Hindu devotionalism, but quite enthusiastic about the larger implications of methodical training for expanded consciousness. Stein, we know, was a devoted student of James's during the 1890s, and involved herself in almost everything he did We have one clue that she attended the local comparative religions seminars, and she probably had a chance to talk with Vivekananda directly either there or with other Harvard students just before he spoke.

One other graduate student who may have been present and who is worth mentioning was Horatio W. Dresser, Swedenborgian minister and ardent student of William James. His parents had been disciples of Phineas Parkhurst Quimby, the man who pioneered in clairvoyant healing, whose disciples launched the New Thought movement, and the person who had originally healed Mary Baker Eddy, later the founder of Christian Science. Dresser was deeply interested in Asian ideas, as he was part of a larger community of mental healers in America, which included occult spiritualists, Theosophists, New Thought practitioners, Christian Scientists, and Rosecrucians, all of whom to one degree or another had regularly dipped into the teachings of the Masters of the Far East. for ideas, terminology, techniques, and personal inspiration to construct their respective therapeutic and religious systems.

One whom we know for certain was present was Mrs. Ole Bull, Vivekananda's hostess on that occasion, who had staged a reception afterward in her home for everyone attending the talk. Mrs. Bull was the widow and second wife of the late Ole Bull, famous Swedish violinist. She was a close disciple and supporter of Vivekananda and her Cambridge home on Brattle Street was a fashionable salon for visiting dignitaries, scholars, social reformers, and mental healers. Mrs. Bull was the chief sponsor for what came to be known as the Cambridge Seminars in Comparative Religions, a direct outgrowth of the Chicago Parliament of Religions that promoted understanding and appreciation of both the philosophy and religion of world cultures, especially those that were non-western. James, Royce, and Lanman had spoken there on different occasions; such personalities as Gertrude Stein and Jane Addams were noted auditors; and Vivekananda had been an extended guest on several occasions.

Having assessed the probable guest list, we should turn now to the substance of Vivekananda's address, entitled 'The Vedanta Philosophy.' Vedanta is probably the most orthodox Hindu school of philosophy to interpret the scriptures known as the Vedas, the most revered texts that define Hinduism as it has evolved since 1500 B.C. Vivekananda represented the Advaita view of the Vedanta philosophy,

which is one of non-difference between the individual self and the Supreme Self. His presentation was both technically accurate and philosophically compelling to those who knew that literature. He described the end or aim of spiritual practice as the complete cessation of sense attachment to illusory phenomena, and he expressed this goal in terms of self-abnegation, or self-sacrifice for the sake of others. These ideals were of particular interest to members of the Philosophy Department, as the reigning questions of the day in western philosophical circles revolved around the relation of the One to the Many, monism versus pluralism, and the links between individual character development and social evolution.

Of particular interest, was Vivekananda's definition of psychology. By it, he meant the spiritual evolution of consciousness, not simply the description of sense data and its analysis by the mind. The very impetus for our perceptions, he said, was not stimulation from external sources followed by an organism's response, but rather the active spiritual principle in each of us, which uses the mind to reach out and grasp objects in the external world and, by so doing, one gives those objects life and meaning. In external science, he said, concentration of mind means putting our attention on something out there, beyond us in the material environment and then discovering the myriad differences between things through discrimination and selection, while in internal science, concentration of mind means drawing consciousness back towards one's self—a process of involution, where consciousness is systematically detached from the various objects in the external world until the mind itself becomes the object of conscious absorption. Awareness is thereby cleansed or purified, so that consciousness, and hence personality, is transformed. This, he said, was yoga.

But academic psychology in America at that time and in the decades that subsequently followed became more and more confined to the laboratory measurement of discrete bits of observable behaviour. The study of individuals was abandoned for the wholesale measurement of groups, and an historic breach occured that remains presently unmended between psychologists doing research in the laboratories, which justified their occupation as a science, and psychologists interested in helping people and addressing social needs. This last group, while probably the biggest numerically, continues to remain in a state of disenfranchisement, with an as yet unwritten history, no secure place in the academic curriculum, and is seen mainly as second class scientific endeavour.

James, we have said, believed that psychology could only progress as a science by addressing itself to the full spectrum of human experience. Thus he saw in Vivekananda's inner science a vast unexplored dimension for the understanding of personality and character formation. We know from subsequent references he made to Vivekananda's system that James saw great value in the Hindu practice of systematic, daily periods of concentrated relaxation. These, James felt, could be of great use in preparing American children for learning in the classroom. James also observed in the methods of Vivekananda's yoga a form of spiritual discipline that could be used by anyone to penetrate into untapped reservoirs of energy and power for physical as well as mental tasks, and also in the treatment of certain neurasthenic conditions. Such discipline, he also suggested in several places, systematically undertaken, was one of the best examples he had seen of a moral equivalent to man's incessant passion for making war. A language of inner experience, a rigorous psychology of character formation, and

practical application to real-life problems were but a few of the advantages that James saw in Vivekananda that were being ignored by the German-trained brass instrument psychologists then taking control of the academic psychology departments in America.

James was open-minded and cosmopolitan enough to meet Vivekananda on his own terms. Both were alike, and yet different, in many ways. Both were philosophers—James the pragmatist, who took raw human experience as his standard, which had to square with the demands of everyday common empirical reality; Vivekananda the mystic, who derived his interpretation of all outward life from the power of an ultimately transforming inward vision of the Supreme Atman. Both were men of action—James who was so deeply involved in the Anti-imperialistic League and the international peace movement; Vivekananda who was committed by religious vows to the alleviation of suffering and the promotion of a world spiritual consciousness. Both practised a *sādhana*—for Vivekananda it was the classical techniques of meditation; while James once wrote that his own form of spiritual discipline was lecturing and writing.

Yet in their meeting we see the brief, but friendly and fruitful contact of two great world systems which continue to have potential for inoculating each other with what the other must necessarily lack. This might be conceptualized as the world of western empirical science, which has yet to comprehend, first, its own implicit value orientation and, second, the persistent but quite uncontrolled intervening variable of personal consciousness which pervades all its endeavours; and the Eastern world view of inner science, which, in the case of yoga, for instance, has been systematically applied for thousands of years, but has yet to be studied, quantified, and harnessed by western scientific methods. Each system has something unique to contribute to the other.

Yet, it is a curious fact of history that the psychology that was practised in India two thousand years ago was more like the psychology taught at Harvard in the 1890s under James, than the psychology taught today in academic universities is like the psychology taught in America one hundred years ago. Contemporary analysts are fond of saying that this is due to the advancement of psychology as a rigorous science. We cannot discount the possibility, however, that even here in America, as psychologists, we may have known more about human nature one hundred years ago than we do now. We may have had a more acute understanding of what constitutes an intuitive psychology of character development back then, which we had to jettison in order to adopt the rather narrowing strictures of a scientific method that was barely in its adolescence, but that nevertheless was, and continues to be, the hallmark of the modern age. At the present, instead of merely establishing psychology as a legitimate member of the western scientific community, we may face a new agenda of reforming the discipline along the lines of a more broad-minded, visionary, eclectic, and person-centred science.

This suggests that at Harvard, barely one hundred years ago, the fact that comparative religions, sociology, classical Greek philosophy, logic, brass instrument laboratory methods, and experimental psychopathology could all be taught under the aegis of the Department of Philosophy might not be merely some historical anomaly. How do we know that the kind of science we are promulgating now will be the kind we espouse one hundred years hence? It may be that the coming revolution in the scientific enterprise will pivot

on the problem of consciousness, and will be equal in effect to the transformations witnessed five hundred years ago in the time of Galileo and Copernicus. If so, we may yet find great relevance in the age-old inner sciences of India to a scientific psychology of the future.

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13. Acknowledgments are gratefully extended to Mrs. Marie Louise Burke, whose biographies of Vivekananda I have drawn extensively from; to Dr. Prem Shankar and Uma Parameswaran of the University of Winnipeg for helpful comments; and to the Harvard-MIT Vedanta Society for graciously sponsoring the talk upon which this written version is based.

VEDIC SYMBOLISM

DR. ARDHENDU SEKHAR GHOSH

Vedic literature

In India the Vedas[1] are acknowledged significant portion of which seems to have been lost. The word 'Veda' derived from the Sanskrit root *vid* 'to know', may be said to correspond, in a literal sense, to the word 'science' which is also derived from the Latin root *scio* meaning 'I know'. However, the word 'science' is generally associated with the knowledge of the outer physical world, while the word 'Veda' is associated with the knowledge of the inner psycho-spiritual world. It is becanse they embody the eternal truths and laws of the inner world that the Vedas are regarded as *anādi*, beginningless, and *apaurusheya*, without author. The work of compilation and systematization of the different

1. The Vedas consist of four books, of which three, namely, *Ṛk* (hymns), *Sāma* (songs) and *Yajus* (prose) are related to sacrificial rites, whereas *Atharva*, the fourth book, is not so related. Each of these books is a compilation of the works of several seers known as Ṛṣis. Internal and external evidences suggest that these books are only a part of a vast literature which originated in prehistoric times and a

to be the fountain-head of all knowledge and wisdom. There are of course different schools of Hindu religion and philosophy, which superficially appear to be divergent in their viewpoints, yet all of them claim to derive their authority from the Vedas. Jainism and Buddhism do not accept in principle the authority of the Vedas, yet the influence exerted by the Vedas upon them is so great that they may be regarded as parts of the same Indian religious tradition.

It is the *Ṛk-saṁhitā* that has received the most attention from modern scholars who have interpreted it in various ways. The aim of this paper, which is heavily indebted to the works of Sri Aurobindo, Anirvan, Kunhan Raja[2] and others, is just to introduce the reader to the vast and largely unexplored field of Vedic symbolism an understanding of which is very much necessary for a correct exegesis of the Vedas.

The *Ṛg-Veda* consists mainly of hymns addressed to different deities, such as Agni, Indra, Vāyu, Savitṛ, Sūrya, Uṣā, Nakta; Mitra, Varuṇa, Aśvins (twin gods), Ribhus, Maruts, Rudra and many others. Some of these gods can be readily identified with Nature's powers, e.g. Agni with fire, Vāyu with air, Savitṛ with the rising sun, Sūrya with the midday sun, Uṣā with the dawn, and so on. There are some others which cannot be so readily identified ; for example, Rudra, Aśvins (twin gods) etc. who appear more as persons than as having any connection with natural phenomena. Rudra is described as one of the parents of Maruts, the storm gods. Traditionally, he has been identified with Śiva of the later Purāṇic literature. Aśvins are two gods riding on horses and possessing the power of healing. From the text and the commentaries, it would appear that Mitra represents the day, Varuṇa the oceans, Maruts the storm gods, Ribhus the rays of the sun, Nakta the evening, and so on.

Several questions suggest themselves in this context. Were the Vedic Ṛṣis only Nature worshippers ? If yes, how to explain deities like Rudra and Aśvins ? Were there any rituals associated with these prayers ? Do the names of deities as we find them in the Saṁhita represent something other than Nature's powers ? One chapter of the Saṁhita is concerned entirely with Soma, which may mean a mythical plant as well as its juice having intoxicating properties. It seems gods were also fond of this drink. Has Soma any significance other than being an intoxicating liquor ? In short, in *Ṛg-Veda* one finds 'a body of sacrificial hymns couched in a very ancient language which

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original works of the Ṛṣis, which was obviously done at a much later date, is attributed to Vyāsa. He might have improved upon earlier attempts, if any, in this direction. The possibility that Vyāsa might have, for some reason or other, omitted to include in his compilation, some of the then known works cannot be ruled out.

Each of the four books consists of four parts: 1. the *Samhita*, collection of *mantras* or hymns; 2. the *Brāhmaṇa*, dealing with rites and ceremonies; 3. the *Aranyaka* consisting chiefly of meditations; 4. the *Upaniṣad* containing knowledge of the ultimate Reality. Obviously this division is not watertight. For example, the famous *Isopanisad* forms a part of the *Yajur-Samhita*. Earlier to Vyāsa, Vedic literature fell broadly into two groups: Mantras and Brāhmaṇas. The Mantras became Samhita (meaning 'placed together') once they were systematized. Araṇyakas and Upaniṣads were included under the Brāhmaṇas. As is well known, the Upaniṣads form the cornerstone on which stands the philosophy of Vedanta. The Bhagavad Gītā contains a summary of the teachings of the Upaniṣads.

2. Sri Aurobindo, *The Secret of the Vedas* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1971)

Anirvan, *Veda Mīmāmsa* (Bengali) in 3 volumes (Calcutta: Sanskrit College, 1961).

C. Kunhan Raja, *The Quintessence of the Rigveda* (Bombay: D.B. Taraporevala Sons & Co. 1964).

presents a number of almost insoluble difficulties. It is full of ancient forms and words which do not appear in later speech and have often to be fixed in some doubtful sense by intelligent conjecture'.

As a matter of fact, without the help of some explanatory notes and commentaries, it is practically impossible to grasp the significance of these hymns, or what they really mean. The Brāhmaṇas are indeed the first commentaries on the Vedic Mantras. It is from the Brāhmaṇas that we learn that these hymns were meant to be used in sacrificial rites, and about other details pertaining to them.

Naturalistic interpretation

Some of the hymns, like the one translated literally below, render themselves easily to a naturalistic interpretation.

Ṛṣi: Hiraṇyastupa, Chapter I, Hymn 32:

I will now proclaim the heroic exploits of Indra which he had performed in the beginning. He killed the dragon. He urged the waters down. He broke open the channels in the mountains. (1)

He killed the dragon who had been living in the mountain. The divine architect fashioned for him the Vajra, which is easy to handle and to smite with. Like milch-cows that make a bellowing sound, the waters falling down quickly rushed towards the ocean. (2)

Behaving like a strong bull, he accepted the Soma to drink He drank the Soma that had been pressed from the Three Vessels. The powerful hero took up the weapon, the Vajra. He killed the first-born among the dragons. (3)

When Indra killed the first-born among the dragons, he was able to destroy the mysterious powers of those who had been wielding such powers. He then produced the Sun, also the celestial region and the Dawn. Thereby, there remained no enemy to him, known. (4)

Indra killed Vṛtra, the worst sinner, splitting off his shoulder with his Vajra, the mighty smiter. He split up his body like the trunk of a tree, with his Vajra. The dragon lay touching the earth below. (5)

With his legs and hands removed from him, he fought with Indra. Then Indra smote the Vajra on his sides. He wanted to be a rival to the strong bull. But being smitten, he lay scattered in many places, having been cut into pieces. (7)

The waters began to flow over him who was lying down like this, taking up their hearts, as if the waters were flowing over the bed of a river that had been dug for them. These very waters which Vṛtra had been encompassing and stopping with his powers, the dragon had to lie down falling at their feet. (8)

She who had Vṛtra as her son had come down there to protect him. Indra bronght down the deadly weapon over her also. In that state, the mother lay above and the son was below; that demoness lay there down like a cow with her calf. (9)

In the midst of the waters that never stop, that never take a rest in their flow, the body of Vrtra lay concealed. The waters flowed freely over the concealed body of Vṛtra. He who had Indra as a foe, lies there in eternal darkness.[3] (10)

Note how vivid the whole description is. From this description one would be tempted to theorize that Indra is related to the clouds, and that the story of Vṛtra and the release of the waters stopped by him, is only a description of the phenomenon of waters hidden in the clouds and their release by the electrical discharge of lightning. The weapon called Vajra stands for the thunderbolt and the lightning. Indra is helped in this fight by Maruts, the storm gods; this fact though not mentioned in the foregoing hymn is mentioned elsewhere. From this hymn the Ṛṣis appear to have been nature poets. Just like any other nature poet, they could impart life even to inanimate things and phenomena. This way of looking at the Vedic hymns as a description of natural phenomena full of animism accords well with the theory of some modern scholars that the Vedic poets were Nature worshippers. Note how evocative this hymn is even as poetry.

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3. Translation of this and other hymns given in this article is by Kunhan Raja.

Historical interpretation

The Vedic gods are often eulogized for fighting with and defeating demons. Hymns in eulogy of Indra as a slayer of the demon Vṛtra occur at several other places of the *Ṛk-saṁhitā*. There are references to Dasyus, Paṇis etc. who are depicted as robbers and enemies of the Vedic people. The Paṇis, for example, lifted their cattle and kept them hidden in caves in the mountain belonging to Vala. The story of Indra killing Vala and recovering the cattle is well known in the Vedic lore. Some scholars, particularly European Indologists, think that such lores contain some historical truths, namely, the fights which used to break out between the Aryans and non-Aryans, when the former were trying to settle down in India.

Spiritual interpretation

The Sanskrit word *go* ordinarily means 'cow'; but that sense does not seem to fit in with the context in several verses. In many places the sense of 'light' fits better, as for instance, the use of the word *gomatī* in the description of Dawn, the harbinger of light. It is possible that the physical phenomenon of light symbolically means inner illumination, knowledge or wisdom. Thus, the above lore of cows being released from dark caves may as well represent symbolically a psychic experience, namely, the realization of spiritual illumination which lies hidden in the dark chamber of the human heart.

Go is not the only word which poses linguistic problems. Words having double sense or even triple sense are found almost throughout the *Ṛg-Veda*. That the Ṛg-Vedic language is highly symbolic is beyond question. That there are psychological and spiritual truths is quite obvious in certain hymns such as the ones given below:

Ṛṣi: Dīrghatamas. Chapter I, Hymn 164:

I with my limited knowledge, ask in my mind, not knowing the truth, about these concealed positions of the gods. (5)

Not having seen, I ask the poets who have seen, for the sake of knowing, not having known. (6)

Let him declare here who certainly knows this—the concealed position of the lovable bird. (7)

Two birds, joined together, companions, resort to the same tree. Of them one eats the berry (of various tastes) and the other simply gazes on without eating anything. (20)

The life, breathing, rushing fast, remains still at rest. Rushing forward, it remains steady by its own powers, becoming an immortal having the same abode as the mortal. (30)

I do not realize what kind of person I am. I am hidden and yet I move about enwrapped in thoughts. (37)

Language may be divided into four parts. Of the four parts, only the poets who have imagination can know all of them. Three parts remain concealed in the cave unmoving and only the fourth part is in use among men. (45)

Ṛṣi: Bṛhaspati Āṅgiras. Chapter X, Hymn 71:

Just as a woman separates the flour with a winnowing basket from the unbroken parts, the intelligent persons utter their words in the learned assembly and there the companions find their true companions. Their auspicious lustre is concealed in their words. (2)

Some people may look and yet they do not see. Some people may listen and yet they do not hear. The language reveals its beauty only to some, just as a loving wife wearing charming robes reveals her charms only to her husband. (4)

Some of the hymns are so poignant and their psychological and mystic significance is so patent that they do not need much intellectual labour. Note that the verse depicting two birds sitting on the same tree, one eating and the other simply

gazing, is found verbatim in two of the Upaniṣads, the *Muṇḍaka* (III.1.2) and *Śvetāśvatara* (IV,6). This clearly shows the extent of influence the *Ṛg-Veda* exerted on the later sages of the Upaniṣadic period. In the language of Vedanta, the two birds sitting together on the same tree stand for the individual self (*jīvātman*) and the Supreme Self (*Paramātman*) dwelling in the same personality.

A retrospect of Vedic exegesis

It was Sri Aurobindo who gave psycho-spiritual interpretation a firm locus standi in Vedic exegesis. Before discussing his theory it may be useful to give in brief his masterly analysis of the course Vedic interpretation took from the early Vedic period to the period of Sāyaṇa in the 16th century:

Veda, then, is the creation of an age anterior to our intellectual philosophies.... The Ṛṣi was not the individual composer of the hymn, but the seer (*drasta*) of an eternal truth and an impersonal knowledge. The language of Veda itself is Śruti; a rhythm not composed by the intellect but heard, a divine Word that came vibrating out of the Infinite to the inner audience of the man who had previously made himself fit for the impersonal knowledge... In the Vedic idea of the revelation there is no suggestion of the miraculous or the supernatural...

From the historical point of view the *Ṛg-Veda* may be regarded as a record of a great advance made by humanity by special means at a certain period of its collective progress.... The hymns possess indeed a finished metrical form, a constant subtlety and skill in their technique, great variations of style and poetical personality; they are not the work of rude, barbarous and primitive craftsmen, but the living breath of a supreme and conscious Art forming its creations in the puissant but well-governed movement of a self-observing inspiration...

... Certain it is that the old tradition of a progressive obscuration (the Veda itself speaking constantly of 'ancient' and 'modern' Ṛṣis) and loss of the Veda as the law of the human cycle has been fully justified by the event. The obscuration had already proceeded far before the opening of the next great age of Indian spirituality, the Vedantic, which struggled to preserve or recover what it yet could of the ancient knowledge... The Brāhmaṇas and the Upaniṣads are the record of a powerful revival which took the sacred text and ritual as a starting point for a new statement of spiritual thought and experience. This movement had two complementary aspects, one, the conservation of forms, another the revelation of the soul of Veda—the first represented by the Brāhmaṇas largely (as the Brāhmaṇas also have their philosophical passages), the second by the Upaniṣads.

The Brāhmaṇas labour to fix and preserve the minutiae of the Vedic ceremony, the conditions of their material effectuality ... the significance of texts important in the ritual ... the memory of ancient myths and traditions... While the Upaniṣads are invaluable for the light they shed on the principal ideas and on the psychological system of the ancient Ṛṣis, they help us as little as the Brāhmaṇas in determining the accurate sense of the texts which they quote. Their real work was to found Vedanta rather than to interpret Veda...

A sharp practical division came into being, effective though never entirely recognized in theory, between Veda and Vedanta, a distinction which might be expressed in the formula, 'the Veda for the priests, the Vedanta for the sages.' ... The Vedas, becoming less and less the indispensable basis of education, were no longer studied with the same zeal and intelligence; their symbolic language, ceasing to be used, lost the remnant of its inner sense to new generations whose whole manner of thought was different from that of the Vedic forefathers. The Ages of Intuition were passing away into the first dawn of the Age of Reason.

Buddhism completed the revolution... It sought to abolish the Vedic sacrifice and to bring into use the popular vernacular in place of the literary tongue. And although the consummation of its work was delayed for several centuries by the revival of Hinduism in the Purāṇic religion, the Veda itself benefited little by this respite... For the masses of the nation the Purāṇas pushed aside the Veda and the forms of new religious systems took the place of the ancient ceremonies...

The commentary of Sāyaṇa closes the period of original and living scholastic work on the Veda which Yāska's *Nirukta* among other important authorities may be said to open... The commentary is almost the last great work of the kind

left to us by classical tradition in its final refuge and centre in Southern India before the old culture was dislocated and broken into regional fragments by the shock of the Mohammedan conquest....[4]

Aurobindo's psychological interpretation

That there are hidden spiritual, philosophical and psychological truths at least in some passages of the Veda is clear from the verses quoted above. Sāyaṇācārya and even earlier commentators also admit them. To quote Aurobindo,

... Sāyaṇa admits them; but they form an exceptional element in his work, insignificant in bulk and importance. Occasionally he gives a passing mention or concession to less current psychological renderings. He mentions, for instance, but not to admit it, an old interpretation of Vṛtra as the Coverer who holds back from man the objects of his desire and his aspirations. For Sāyaṇa Vṛtra is either simply the enemy or the physical cloud-demon who holds back the waters and has to be pierced by the Rain-giver... But it is the ritualistic conception that pervades... Sāyaṇa labours always in the light of this idea.[5]

The contention of Aurobindo, on the other hand, is that *all* the hymns, not simply a few, are based on the spiritual experiences of the seers and so are amenable to mystic interpretation. He has chosen quite a few hymns to illustrate his point and has offered a self-consistent and plausible interpretation conforming to his own spiritual experiences. This approach seems to be not only logical, but is also entirely new to the theory of Vedic interpretation. He, however, says that the whole problem of the interpretation of the Veda still remains an open book, in which any contribution that can throw light on the problem should be welcome.

Aurobindo's main postulates are the following:

Their (the Vedic hymns') formulas and ceremonies are, overtly, the details of an outward ritual for the Pantheistic Nature-Worship which was then the common religion, covertly the sacred words, the effective symbols of spiritual experience and knowledge and a psychological discipline of self-culture which were the highest achievement of the human race. The ritual system recognized by Sāyaṇa may, in its externalities, stand; the naturalistic sense discovered by European scholarship may, in its general conceptions, be accepted; but behind them there is always the true and still hidden secret of the Veda—the secret words, *niṇya vacāmsi* which were spoken for the purified in soul and the awakened in knowledge.

In other words,

The Ṛṣis arranged the substance of their thought in a system of parallelism by which the same deities were at once internal and external powers of universal Nature... The Veda is primarily intended to serve for spiritual enlightenment and self-culture. It is, therefore, this sense (psychological sense) which has first to be restored.

Sanskrit is a phonetic language; its words are derived from some root sounds which correspond more to general sensation and emotion-values rather than formed ideas.[6]

In consequence, the word originally was not fixed to any precise idea. It had a character of quality (*guṇa*) which was capable of a great number of applications and therefore of a great number of possible significance.[7]

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4. Sri Aurobindo, *The Secret of the Vedas*, p. 1-31

5. *ibid.*

6. This also explains why in the Mantra-sastra, correct pronunciation and intonation are so important.

7. Flexibility is there in modern languages also. For instance, the word 'incline' can be used in a physical sense, as in 'an inclined plane', or in a psychological sense, as in 'I am inclined to do'. The problem, however, arises when a language becomes old, and the old usages with the subtle sense are lost to the new generations.

For example, *dhenu* meant the fosterer, nourisher, and therefore a cow. Similarly, a word which meant food could also mean enjoyment, pleasure ; therefore it could be used by the Ṛṣis to suggest to the worldly mind only the food given at the sacrifice to gods, but to suggest to the initiated the *ānanda*, the joy of the divine bliss entering into the physical consciousness. In the same way, *soma* suggests the intoxicating drink of Soma-wine, as well as the Vedic symbol of *ānanda*. In regard to Agni, the most important deity of the Vedic lore, let us note, 'Agni meant the Strong, it meant the Bright, or even Force, Brilliance So it could easily recall to the initiated, wherever it occurs, the idea of the Illumined Energy which builds up the worlds, and which exalts man to the Highest, the doer of the great work, the *purohit* of the human sacrifice.' *Purohit* means 'put in front', and therefore could mean the priest in ordinary sense. 'Psychologically, then, we may take Agni to be the divine will perfectly inspired by divine Wisdom...'

As regards the symbolic character of Yajña, the Vedic sacrifice, let us recall that the word Yajña is used in the Gītā in a symbolic sense for all action, whether internal or external, that is consecrated to the gods or to the Supreme. (Vide, for example, Bhagavad Gītā, IV, 25-30). In the Veda, there are hymns 'in which the idea of Yajña or of the victim is openly symbolical, others in which the veil is quite transparent.'[8] The sacrificial offering of *ghṛta* (clarified butter) is used in the Veda in connection with thought or the mind. The word *ghṛta* counts also among its philological significances the sense of rich or warm brightness. The Veda sometimes speaks plainly of offering the intellect (*dhiṣaṇa*) as purified *ghṛta* to the gods.[9] Unless thoughts are sacrificed, one does not see the forces operating behind the thoughts. Thoughts can be sacrificed to Agni, the illumined Will in man, the Power capable of taking an individual beyond objectified thoughts to their source and ultimately wisdom. Indra, who is next in importance to Agni in the *Ṛg-Veda*, represents in the psychological interpretation the illumined mentality. The word for the sense-faculties, *indriya* is derived from his name as he represents Mind-power.

The fruits of offerings are in appearance purely material—cows, horses, gold, offspring and so on.

The cow and horse, *go* and *asva*, are constantly associated. Uṣā, the Dawn is described as *gomatī, asvavati*; Dawn gives to the sacrificer horses and cows. As applied to the physical dawn, *gomatī* means accompanied by or bringing the rays of light and is an image of the dawn of illumination in the human mind... *go* and *asva* represent the two companion idea Light and Energy, Consciousness and Force, which to the Vedic and Vedantic mind were the double or twin aspects of all the activities of Existence.[10]

In the Veda, there are references to various worlds. They are identified with the corresponding planes of consciousness.

The struggle between gods and demons, as pointed out before, represents the struggle between the power of the higher Good and the lower desires. The latter, being fragmenting and divisive, work against the free and unified integrality of the being. Thus Vṛtras, Rākṣasas, Paṇis, Vala etc. are not non-Aryan chieftains 'as the modern mind with its exaggerated historic sense would like them to be.'[11]

That there are different facets of

8. Sri Aurobindo, *The Secret of the Vedas*, p. 39.

9. *Ṛg-Veda*. 3.2.1

10. Sri Aurobindo, *The Secret of the Vedas*,

11. *ibid* p. 44.

symbolism in the Vedic language, such as naturalistic, ritualistic, psychological, mystic, seems clear from the above brief exposition with a few illustrations. For more elaborate details about the psychological and mystic aspects, the original work of Aurobindo may be consulted, which also contains translations of several Vedic passages.

The psychological interpretation would perhaps explain and justify rationally the whole religious tradition of India which holds that the Vedanta, Purāṇa, Tantra, the philosophical schools and the various sects have their source to Vedic origins.

(*To be concluded*)

GANDHISM IN PERSPECTIVE: POLITICS AS PHILOSOPHY AND CULTURE

DR. ANIL BARAN RAY

> He (Gandhiji) was a curious phenomenon—a person of the type of a medieval Catholic saint, as Mr. Verrier Elwin has called him—and at the same time a practical leader with his pulse always on the Indian peasantry. Which way he might turn in a crisis it was difficult to say, but whichever way it was, it would make a difference. He might go the wrong way, according to our thinking, but it would always be a straight way.[1]

So wrote Jawaharlal Nehru in his *Autobiography*. In the opinion of Nehru, Gandhiji was a 'curious phenomenon' because he was a saint applying his metaphysical outlook to politics. And yet this is basic to an understanding of the 'enigma' that is Gandhiji. To understand Gandhiji in perspective, one has to read his philosophy and politics together.[2] They cannot be taken apart as they are inseparable. Indeed, taking them apart is like staging *Hamlet* without the ghost and doing violence to the essence of that integrated philosophico-political thought known as the Gandhism.

Gandhiji appeared on the political platform of India towards the end of the first decade of the twentieth century. The Indian national movement, however, had started a decade and a half before his arrival on the scene on the issue of the Curzon-contrived Partition of Bengal in 1905. If we analyse the pre-Gandhi national movement we will see three streams in it: (1) the Congress 'moderate' stream, (2) the Congress 'extremist' stream, and (3) the revolutionary or the terrorist stream. The participants in these three streams came mostly from high and middle classes. They were English-educated and urban based.

Gandhiji understood that if it was not possible to spread the movement among the masses of people and to turn it into a genuine mass movement then it would not be possible to achieve the desired effect. Thus, the first thing that he did on assuming the leadership of the non-cooperation movement in 1920-21 was to bring about a *qualitative change* in the character of the national movement. Along with the change in the *character* of the

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1. Jawaharlal Nehru, *An Autobiography* (Bombay: Allied Publishers Pvt. Ltd. 1962) p. 403.

2. 'Gandhi's techniques of political action and his world views formed a unified whole.' See S. P. Aiyar, *Modernization of Traditional Society* (1973) Pp. 68-69.

movement, change was also brought about in the *method and technique* of the movement. How would the mass movement be led? The answer was: through the non-violent method. Why the non-violent method? If we are to understand clearly the reason for this 'why', then we have to be knowledgeable about the goal or end of the movement. The end was the establishment of truth[3] or the restoration of truth in its proper place—the truth that the spiritually oriented agitator, the conscience-awakener, is seeing in perspective but his adversary is not able to see in perspective because his vision is veiled by his egoistic, narrow, selfish interests. He who has come into the movement with the sole purpose of realizing the truth himself and making his adversary realize the same is not an agitator in the ordinary sense of the term. He is a *satyāgrahi*, a pursuer of truth. Since he has nothing but the pursuit of truth in his heart, his movement is thus to be called *satyāgraha.*

In such a movement, there is no question of the *satyāgrahi* or his adversary winning or losing, because the only one that wins here is the eternal and all-pervading truth which is by its very nature placed above all parties and above everything else. Where the end is so high the means must be equally pure and lofty. In order to unveil the veiled vision of the adversary, the *satyāgrahi* must be prepared for all kinds of sacrifices—physical, mental and material. It is only through suffering and self-sacrifices of all sorts that the *satyāgrahi* will bring about changes in the heart and mind of the adversary. Truth will be victorious by gaining its rightful place only through the *transformation* or the *conversion* of the adversary. The manifestations of this technique[4] of mass movement that Gandhiji adopted were seen time and again in his various civil disobedience movements, in the Salt March and finally, in his 'Quit-India' movement.

Apart from bringing about changes in the *character* and *technique* of the national movement, the other thing that Gandhiji wanted us to understand was that eternal message of the Upaniṣad—*tena tyaktena bhuñjithā*, 'Enjoy through renunciation'. One who could have taken any post of high power and dignity after the achievement of independence in India kept himself away from that in all humility. It was as if he wanted to teach us that since the main objective of the freedom struggle, namely, the establishment of truth and justice had been achieved, there need not be any more hankering after power. In other words, it is not *power* (in the sense of seeking and aggrandizing it) but *service*[5]

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3. Truth derived from the Sanskrit word *sat*, 'being' means the essence. See Joan V. Bondurant, *Conquest of Violence: The Gandhian Philosophy of Conflict* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1969), p. vi. In Gandhiji's philosophy, it is the same as the all-pervading Atman of the Upanisadic-Gītā tradition.

4. The philosophical basis of the Gandhian technique of *satyāgraha* through *ahimsā* also is derived from the Upaniṣadic tradition of the all-pervading Atman. As N.G.S. Kini rightly observes, 'Ahimsa as the central principle informing Gandhian action is derived from Atman which is commonly shared by the adversaries and combatants. Himsa results when this common factor is *veiled.* To remove this veil which is a source of contention, discord, ego-centredness and exploitation, Gandhi used *atmasakti* (*satyagraha*) and foster again the common factor (Atman) which again unites the opponents in a filial bond. This filial bond is the basis of all society and at the macro level, when approached as cooperation inherent in a system of interdependence, it is Dharma.' 'Gandhian Contribution to the Theory of Politics' in V.T. Patil (ed.), *Studies on Gandhism* (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1983) p. 5.

5. Worthy of mention in this connection is his desire to turn the Indian National Congress into *Lok Sevak Sangh.*

(to people) that should be the objective of politics. Politics should be 'goodness politics' seeking to transform social relationships in terms of certain ultimate values and not 'power politics'[6] devoid of any idealist strain in it. Further, he wanted to deliver the message that the leader will be a selfless, all-sacrificing person, like the Philosopher-King of Plato.

We know that it is a very lofty ideal. But then it is worthy of emulation only because it is so noble in its conception. Through emulation we may not be able to realize it fully in practical life, but can try to approximate ourselves to it so that through such continuous striving it may become realizable some day

We could not fully adopt the Gandhian ideal in the system of our polity. But Gandhiji did not want the expansion of State and government. He held that that government was the best which governed the least. He wanted the growth of the society and fulfilment of the individual in an evil-free and clean society. If the individual brings about the fullest development of his personality through the continuous cultivation and the consequent realization of ideal values in his personal, civic and political life, then there will be no need for the State one day. It will simply wither away.[7] Gandhiji specifically recommended the avoidance of the commitment of the following sins:

1. Politics without principles
2. Wealth without work
3. Pleasure without conscience
4. Knowledge without character
5. Commerce without morality
6. Science without humanity, and
7. Worship without sacrifice.

Unfortunately, our greatest deficiency today lies in our failure on the fronts mentioned above by Gandhiji. We have become today the materialistic members of a consumer-society always demanding more and ever more for our consumption. We have become the slaves of a rights-demanding, dutyless work ethics. Our unprincipled politics, and what is most worrying, our *crisis of culture* is the

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6. 'It is my firm view that we shall keep altogether from power-politics and its contagion... Today politics has become corrupt.... Let us keep out of it.... The greater our inner purity the greater shall be our hold on the people, without any effort on our part', wrote Gandhiji. See D. G. Tendulkar, *Mahatma*, vol. 8, quoted in A.K. Saran, *Gandhi and the Concept of Politics; Towards a Normal Civilisation* (New Delhi: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, 1977) p. 29. Tilak who had no patience with Gandhiji's insistence on truth and non-violence provides an interesting contrast to Gandhiji's concept of politics. He frankly told Gandhiji that truth had no place in politics and observed in a letter to *Young India* that 'politics is a game of worldly people and not of sadhus'. In reply Gandhiji wrote, 'With deference to the Lokamanya, I venture to say that it betrays mental laziness to think that the world is not for sadhus'. See S. P. Aiyar, *op. cit.*, Pp. 68-69,

7. In this sense the end of Gandhism is the same as that of Marxism. The most pronounced difference however is in the means. Unlike in Marxism, conscious and deliberate coercion has no place in the Gandhism. In the latter the emphasis is on the individual raising himself to such a high plane of consciousness that he eventually becomes at one with the all-pervading Atman. Having drawn his inspiration from the Upaniṣad, Gandhiji seems to conclnde his philosophico-political thinking with the following Upaniṣadic message:

'He who sees all beings
in his Self, and
Himself existing in all of them,
Who has realized
the Unity in Diversity
through the same Entity
manifested in all that exists,
Can have no hatred, no illusion, no grief,
(For these crop out of ignorance which
generates a sense of Isolation).'

Īsa Upaniṣad (6-7)

inevitable result of such an attitude to life.

Instead of looking at the state and government for the solution of all our problems, if we focus the spotlight on ourselves and try to remove the crisis of culture at our own *individual* level, that will be the greatest regard paid to the man whom we have called the Father of the Nation.

To sum up, Gandhiji's politics reflected his philosophy, a wholesome attitude to life, a culture[8], so to say. If you are true to your 'being', you just cannot separate 'is' from 'ought', fact from value, means from ends, and politics from morality. All of them are interdependent and it is this interdependence which constitutes Dharma.[9] This *integrated* philosophico-political thought rooted in the Upaniṣadic-Gītā tradition known as Gandhism might defy the understanding of ordinary mortals, but the man who conceptualized it and later applied it in practical life and politics and finally, laid down his life for it on that blackest Friday, the thirtieth of January, 1948 was, no doubt, as Albert Einstein so perceptibly remarked, one of the greatest men who ever walked on this 'imperfect' earth of ours.

8. Numerous meanings have been attributed to the term, culture, prompting Lawrence Lowell to observe that 'nothing in the world is more elusive.... An attempt to encompass its meanings in words is like trying to seize the air in the hand, when one finds that it is everywhere except within one's grasp'. *At War with Academic Traditions in America* (Cambridge, Mass. 1934) P. 115. Exercising on the problem of defining culture, Raymond Williams lists four meanings of the term:

(1) a general state or habit of mind, having close relations with the idea of human perfection;

(2) a general state of intellectual development in a society as a whole;

(3) the general body of arts;

(4) a whole way of life, material, intellectual, spiritual.

I have used the term, culture, in this essay in line with the fourth meaning attributed to the term by Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society*, 1958.

9. In this sense politics is not just what Harold D. Lasswell has termed, 'Who gets, what, when and how', but it is what Michael Oakeshatt has excellently expressed as 'the pursuit of intimations', that is, 'a calling which beckons man to unfold his eternal and infinite self on the temporal and finite plane of thought and action'. See Raghuveer Singh, *Political Culture and Culture of Politics in India* (Jodhpur: Indian Political Science Conference, 1984) p. 6.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

STRUCTURAL DEPTHS OF INDIAN THOUGHT: By P. T. Raju Published by South Asian Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 36, Netaji Subhas Marg, Daryaganj, New Delhi 110002. 1985. Pp. xxxi + 600. Rs. 73.

Indian philosophy presents a magnificent panorama of rich and varied ideas, profound in depth and impressive in its range and antiquity. There are some standard works which give a comprehensive account of Indian philosophy by competent scholars like Dr. S. N. Dasgupta, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan and a few others. However, all these works are intended primarily to be treated as the history of Indian philosophy, and not as critical and constructive assessment of Indian thought vis-a-vis world thought. Dasgupta's monumental work *History of Indian Philosophy* running into five volumes is pre-eminently a detailed historical narrative culled from the authoritative classical texts and thus its authenticity can never be doubted; but it is

rather bulky and is disproportionate in its treatment of different schools. Radhakrishnan's more popular two-volume work *Indian Philosophy* is laudable for its wealth of concepts and clarity of interpretation, but has a strong religious flavour all through. Dr. J. N. Sinha's presentation of Indian thought is really a painstaking survey. Prof. Hiriyanna's *Outlines* is very precise but too brief. In all these works Indian philosophy is presented as a unique system of thought totally isolated from the far more widely known and minutely studied systems of western thought. In such a situation, we were in need of another treatise on Indian philosophy with a new approach, which would be comparative as well critical and would also identify those thoughts and concepts basal to the structure of Indian thought thereby refuting the facile and fashionable opinion that Indian philosophy is a wholly transcendental, moksha-oriented enterprise having no concern for academic matters and empirical phenomena.

This long standing need of academic and research circles in India and other countries has at last been admirably met by Prof. P. T. Raju's one-volume magnum opus A senior and much esteemed academician who taught philosophy to generations of students in the University of Rajasthan, Jaipur, and the College of Wooster, Ohio, USA, Prof. Raju has authored numerous books on philosophy, some of which have been translated into several languages including German, Spanish and Japanese. Apart from being an able exponent of Indian thought, he is a philosopher in his own right. This individuality is clearly seen in the present massive work which runs to six hundred pages of closely printed matter. Every chapter and every subject is treated in a refreshingly new way.

Taking Windelband's famous *History of Philosophy* as a model, Prof. Raju has sought to present Indian thought through a comparative, critical and constructive estimate of each school. Another unique feature of Prof. Raju's work is the sequential development of thought. His estimates and commentaries 'are made in such a way that the estimate of each preceding school in a way leads often to that of the succeeding one; and the critical discussion of the topics such as space, time, cause, existence, nothingness, etc. can be found to be fairly continuous and coordinated.' Another profound aim (p. xii) of the author is to reconstruct the conclusions of various schools of Indian philosophy into an integral 'Philosophy of the I-am'.

In all, there are seventeen chapters in this huge volume, apart from a fairly detailed 'Preface' (30 pages) and equally elaborate 'Introduction'. In the Preface itself the author has delineated the aim and origin, the need and scope of the work and its special features. To present Indian thought with comparative and constructive criticism in order to make Indian doctrines intelligible and attractive to westerners, to provide a text-book for graduate and post-graduate students in India and other countries, to serve as a companion volume to Radhakrishnan's and Dasgupta's works, and also to facilitate the comparative study of Eastern and Western philosophies ultimately culminating in East-West dialogue and understanding—these are the principal aims of the work. These objectives, the reviewer feels, have been adequately realized in this book through the author's masterly handling of the themes. The 'Introduction' is concerned with the meaning and historical background of Indian philosophy beginning with Vedic religion, values and ways of life which shaped and still continue to shape the life pattern of the people of this land. The chief ideas of eleven authentic and principal Upaniṣads have been discussed in chapter I in a very concise way adopting the methodology most appropriate to a treatise of this type. In chapter II, the study of the schools of Indian philosophy commences with a study of the ethical activism of Mimamsa which, according to the author, is 'the most important and well-developed philosophy of action in India. Dr. Raju makes a departure from the prevailing practice of presenting Indian philosophy as laid down by Mādhavacharya in his *Sarvadarshana Sangraha* and also assigns cogent and convincing reasons in justification of this deviation. Charvaka philosophy, Jainism, Buddhism including its principal schools, Nyāya, Vaisheshika, Samkhya and Yoga form the subect-matter of chapters III to IX. The Vedantic schools cannot be studied properly without an introduction, which the author offers in chapter X followed by another three chapters devoted to the exposition of the schools of Shankara, Ramanuja and Madhva. Other schools of Vedanta, Kashmir Saivism and Shaktism constitute the subject-matter of chapter XIV. The philosophy of Bhagavad Gita, which is the most important and most widely read of the popular philosophical works has been accommodated in chapter XV.

The philosophical systems have been studied and evaluated under the following heads:

(1) Introduction (2) Epistemology (3) Metaphysics (4) Life's Ideal (5) General estimate and constructive comment. Prof. Raju has also suggested significant sub-titles appropriately indicating the central concepts of each system. The main trends of contemporary Indian philosophy which stands at the confluence of divergent currents of thought have been surveyed by the author in chapter XVI. Here he analyses briefly the philosophies of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, Sri Aurobindo, Rabindranath Tagore, M. K. Gandhi, J. Krishnamurthi, Bhagavan Das and Mohammad Iqbal. Though the author has mentioned K. C. Bhattacharya only once in course of his review of the contemporary scene, he has left out K. C. Bhattacharya's philosophical views, who is said to be one of the most outstanding creative academic philosopher of India in the present century. Though the inclusion of Iqbal is a pleasant surprise, the omission of Swami Vivekananda, an exponent of Vedantic Humanism, who harmonized man's inner needs and spiritual aspirations with his social life and secular endeavours, appears inexplicable. In the concluding chapter, Prof. Raju refutes with great vigour and cogency the various charges levelled against Indian thought by narrow-minded western scholars.

Admittedly, the present work represents a new approach to the study of Indian philosophy and is not a stereotyped history of Indian philosophy. The most significant feature of this outstanding work is its critical evaluation of countless philosophical concepts and illuminating comparisons between doctrines of Indian schools and those of western philosophy ranging from Plato to Sartre and Wittgenstein. To take up a chapter-wise discussion of this book would make this review too long. Prof. Raju has much to say on the most of the problems, theories and concepts of each school. And everything he says bears the mark of his individualistic genius. Most of his statements are meticulously documented. All readers may not agree with all opinions of Prof. Raju. But even when the reader disagrees, he will be impressed by the persuasiveness of the author's formulations, and in philosophy this is not a mean achievement. The book is primarily intended for college students, and the reviewer believes that the present work is the most comprehensive, stimulating and authoritative one-volume text book on the subject available in the world market today. The student who buys this book is not likely to outgrow its usefulness for many years. The book is also warmly recommended to the general reader.

Glossary of important Sanskrit terms will prove very helpful to teachers and students alike especially to non-Indians. The Index and Bibliography, though not very exhaustive, will help the earnest thinkers and researchers to extend the scope of reading. South Asian Publishers deserve congratulations for presenting this valuable work in such a pleasant format. The book is moderately priced, being subsidized by the Government of India for the benefit of college students.

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STRESS AND ITS MANAGEMENT BY YOGA: BY DR. K. N. UDUPA. Published by Motilal Banarsidass, Bungalow Road, Delhi 110 007. 1985. Pp. xiv + 395. Rs. 135.

Although Yoga both as a mystical technique and as a system of physical culture is known all over the world and is actively practised by hundreds of thousands of people in India and the West, authentic and systematic investigation into the scientific basis of yoga and its therapeutic value has not been attempted on a large scale. Such an investigation can be undertaken only by a trained scientist who has a genuine interest and faith in the efficacy of yoga. Dr. Udupa, the author of this book, has both these qualifications to a very high degree. He is emeritus Professor of Surgery and Director, Institute of Medical Sciences, Banaras Hindu University. After suffering a break down, he recovered his own health through yoga.

Frend's discovery of the relationship between conflicts in the unconscious and physical illness led to an oversimplification of the cause of many diseases as psycho-somatic, and gave rise to the hope that these ailments could be cured merely through psychoanalysis—a hope which was belied by subsequent experience It was then that Hans Selye showed in the early forties that the immediate cause of many diseases was a series of physiological changes produced by stress. All over the world, especially in the developed countries of the West, stress-induced disorders take a heavy toll of human life and produce physical and mental suffering in large numbers of people.

As regards the origin of stress and how it induces the physiological changes which appear as symptoms, there are two schools of thonght. One school holds that the hypothalamus and its neuro-endocrine apparatus are the highest centre for producing all the bodily disturbances of stress. The other school, which basing itself on the theories of Pavlov, holds that it is the cerebral cortex which originates all the abnormal symptoms. Dr. Udupa and his colleagues found that the two schools could be integrated. According to them it is the cerebral cortex that is stimulated first by stress. Subsequently the hypothalamus and the entire neuro-endocrine apparatus are stimulated. The autonomic nerves are also stimulated by the cerebral cortex via the limbic system and hypothalamus which ultimately cause the disease proper in a given organ or tissue. From this it is clear that it is the neurohumours which are the main connecting links between the cerebral cortex and all the bodily systems. Therefore Dr Udupa decided upon neurohumoral changes as the main parameter in his studies on the effects of yoga on stress.

The book is meant for the use of not only trained medical practitioners but also lay men. The discussions are either non-technical or so simplified that all educated people can follow them. After a brief introduction, the book opens with a chapter on historical background in which the theory of humours prevalent in Indian and Greek systems of medicine and the modern discovery of neurohumours are dealt with. In the next chapter the lay reader gets a clear idea of the brain and the different vital centres in it. Then follow a detailed study of neurohumours and how stress produces neuro-endocrinal changes. Psychological factors in stress diseases and the pathophysiology of stress diseases are dealt with next. Against this medical background the author presents his ideas on yoga, kuṇḍalini, the role of yoga in stress, physiological aspects of yoga and biofeedback—all in an illuminating way which carries conviction to the medical practitioner as well as to the student of yoga. One chapter (no. 12) is devoted to meditation or *dhyāna* in which the author, besides discussing the role of consciousness and the techniques of meditation, gives some remarkable practical hints.

The remaining chapters take up the major disorders one by one and discuss the results of the author's studies on the effects of yoga on those disorders. Among the ailments dealt with in the book are hypertension, ischaemic heart diseases, cardiac arrythmias, bronchial asthma, chronic peptic ulcer, ulcerative colitis, thyrotoxicosis, diabetes mellitus, rheumatoid arthritis, anxiety neurosis and headache. It should be noted that the author's experiments were not restricted to yogic postures and meditation alone. Wherever possible, he supplemented these with the use of medicines of the Indian system of medicine known as Ayurveda. For instance, the administration of dried powder of the fruit *Amalaki* was found to have a beneficial effect in the treatment of peptic ulcer. The various scientific investigations conducted and observations made are carefully described, supported by case studies, graphs and statistical tables.

Unlike the Japanese, who have successfully adapted Zen (derived from *dhyān*) to the practical needs of social life, Indians have not shown the same zeal for or understanding of yoga as an aid in normal healthy living in the secular world. No doubt, there is at present greater awareness regarding the usefulness of yoga, but very few people have worked scientifically to establish it. Dr. Udupa's is in many ways a pioneering attempt in this field. His book goes a long way in evolving a holistic system of medicine by integrating the eastern and western systems. The chief merit of the book, apart from scientific anthenticity, is its great clarity.

Although the book is expensive (even the paperback edition is priced at Rs. 100) we hope it will be widely read especially by doctors. psychiatrists and yoga instructors.

The book was first published in 1978. In the present revised edition there are a few additions on kuṇḍalini, meditation and social aspects of yoga. A detailed bibliography is given at the end.

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THE GOSPEL OF THE HOLY MOTHER SRI SARADA DEVI: Recorded By Her Devotee-Children Published by Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras 600 004. 1984. Pp. xxxix + 409. Rs. 24/- (paper): Rs. 30/- (hard cover).

One of the remarkable features of our century is the emergence of the Feminist dimension of human consciousness into its own. There is a progressive awareness of the principle of Motherhood as the key to the evolution of cultures and the elevation of consciousness. Woman as Enchantress swaying sensate cultures

towards spiritual bankruptcy is today giving place to Woman as Mother and Redeemer.

Dispassionate students of this pehnomenon are bound to discover in the life and message of Ramakrishna and the Holy Mother an extraordinarily significant paradigm reflecting this shift. In fact, it is in terms of their lives that the origins and significance of this shift can be located and assessed.

From this point of view, *The Gospel of the Holy Mother* is an invaluable spiritual document. A comprehensive collection of material which had appeared earlier, it gives us substantially the conversations with and reminiscences of the Holy Mother by as many as 38 devotees both men and women, lay and monastic Some were, in fact, her personal attendants and as such give intimate glimpses of the Mother's outwardly simple but internally immeasurable spiritual life.

The seeming simplicity of her life is, indeed, a formidable obstacle to understanding her. Her outer life lacked even the slightest trace of the interior splendour. Compared to the Master's *Gospel*, here we find no external evidence of the fact that, like the Master, the Mother lived in God, that her very being radiated the constant presence of the Godhead. As one who knew her intimately declared: 'We have lived with her from her very childhood, we have played and mixed intimately with her, but we have never experienced anything supernatural about her. We are surprised to see so many devotees coming to her, a temple built in which she is installed as a deity, and what not. Who knows what all this means!'

Even Swami Saradananda, the supreme authority on the Master's life, expressed the same baffiement: 'We could get some inkling at least of the greatness of the Master, but of this lady we cannot understand anything. She has drawn the veil of Maya so thick around her that no one can see through it and have a glimpse of her greatness.'

In these terms, *The Gospel of the Holy Mother* constantly demands an effort to go beyond the veil and understand the significance of a unique spectacle described by Swami Premananda as one in which 'the empress of the universe is playing the part of a beggar woman at Jayarambati—cleaning the house, washing utensils, winnowing rice and even removing the plates of her devotees after they have taken their food.'

The Mother did away with the external manifestations of divinity and yet revealed and radiated that divinity in virtually every act. Whatever the Master said about the life of the householder spent in constant practice of the presence of God finds in the Mother an effortless, spontaneous, yet natural confirmation and fascinating yet fully convincing demonstration. Keeping one's consciousness shot through with the sense of the sacred bnt without living in seclusion, performing all actions with meticulous care and total involvement—this is the Mother's life-rhythm. In close touch with the hard, grim reality of suffering, loss, pain of almost all kinds (including those occasioned by her own relatives and devotees), she yet spontaneously allowed her divine grace to flow through, healing and revealing, without let or hindrance. Her method is not discourse and dialectic but theophanic demonstration of the innate, imperturbable divine Ground

And what an incredible range of existential realities we find! The afflicted, the curious, the happiness-seeker, the spiritual quester—in hundreds they thronged to the Mother, for solace, for succour. How many types of *klesa*! Loss of children, death of parents, of husbands, of wives, of relatives. Stricken with the delusions of Mahāmāya, they came running to the Mother The Mother herself felt the pain acutely and 'even a thorn in your foot affects me', she said, 'as an arrow in my chest.'

But unlike other mothers, the Mother went straight to the root of this sorrow: 'The sufferings of people bound in the world pain me very much. But what can I do, my child? *They don't seek liberation.*' For those who did seek, the Mother was willing to give the nucleus: initiation by herself. The implicit grace was unfathomable. Even those who knew nothing about the life of the spirit were recepients of the key to the transcendence of suffering.

If the implicit grace was nnstinted, equally incredible were the radically unconventional locales for initiation; she initiated devotees near railway stations, wayside inns, in dreams. One curious instance of this complete transcendence of ceremony is her initiation of a boy who escaped police observation: 'I must initiate him', the Mother declared, 'he has come with such eagerness, braving so many difficulties.'

Initiation was, in the Mother's case, just the beginning of her assumption of full concern for the devotee. She affirmed unequivocally: 'Suppose the Master lets this body of mine perish—do you think I can be free even then so long as a single person of whom I have taken charge remains in bondage? I shall have to be with them all. I have taken the responsibility

for their well-being. Giving initiation is no joke. One has to bear on one's shoulders such a big burden, you see!'

But the Mother kept an eye on everything and never allowed the primacy of spiritual life result in sloppiness and neglect of the secular. 'There are people', she said, 'who perform wonderful deeds under momentary excitement. But a man's true worth can be known only by observing the attention he bestows on his daily inconsequential actions.' Even a casual throwing away of a broom, after sweeping, stung her to remark: 'Should you neglect a thing because it is small ?...It will take just as little time to keep it properly as it takes to throw it away.. An ordinary work too must be done with care and attention.'

The Mother had also unique insight into the ethos and rhythms of a place and the need for a corresponding sense of accommodation. In one context, when somebody complained that her departure to Calcutta from Jayarambati was behind schedule, she told him firmly: 'This is my village. Do you think everything will click with the needle of the clock here, as in Calcutta ? Don't you see how the boys are breaking their bones since morning ?' In regard to inimical social systems, too, her attitude was disarming: 'If anyone is restricted from taking a thing, he will do it stealthily', she said, adding, 'when he becomes convinced that he is doing something against social injunction, he will give it up.'

Finally, this gentlest of persons could blaze forth in indignation even in contexts very remote, one would have thought, from her concerns: political affairs. Getting to know that two pregnant ladies were taken into custody for their participation in the Swadeshi movement and made to walk miles to the station, her initial reaction was a shudder. Recovering from the shock, she burst forth: 'Is this the company's order or is it the heroics of the police... ? If this act is indeed the order of the company, their days are numbered. Were there no men to slap those fellows and release the girls ?'

The Gospel of the Holy Mother thus covers the entire spectrum of the Mother's life. We are grateful to the publishers for giving us this *Gospel* which, invaluable in itself, is an indispensable companion volume to the other *Gospel, The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna.*

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HELEN KELLER'S REFLECTIONS: By Victoria Hugo. Published by the Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, Narendrapur, P.O. Narendrapur, 24 Parganas, West Bengal, 743 508. 1983 Pp. 137. Rs. 10.

The title of the book should perhaps have been 'Reflections on Helen Keller'. Such peculiar use of the English language is found throughout the book but does not detract our attention from its main theme. The book is dedicated by the authoress to Swami Vivekananda and to his disciple Swami Bodhananda who was her teacher. It carries a short foreword by Swami Tathagatananda of the Vedanta Society, New York. Victoria Hugo introduces her work as an attempt to acquaint the younger generation and adults with one of the greatest women of this century. An accomplished musician she has travelled widely giving talks on the life and work of Helen Keller. As a fitting tribute to that great woman, she has donated the sale proceeds of the book to the Blind Boys' Academy of the Ramakrishna Mission, Narendrapur. Victoria Hugo considers Helen Keller to be a mystic and spiritual personality. Helen bestowed upon her 'the lip reading art', the unique method of 'hearing' the spoken word by feeling its vibrations.

Helen Keller was born in 1880 in Alabama, U.S.A., in a well-to-do family. Soon after birth a rare childhood disease made her totally blind and deaf. She was, however, fortunate in having the services of a trained teacher, Anne Sullivan, who lived with her and constantly guided her. Helen was greatly attached to her 'Teacher' to whom she owed everything. Helen's constant companion was Polly Thomson who gave her great support especially after the death of Miss Sullivan. A description of the voyage from the United States to Scotland, the home of Polly is given in the opening chapter. Helen was very magnanimous and treated her servant Herbert as a member of her family. Both Helen and the teacher had life-long friendship with celebrities such as Alexander Graham Bell and Mark Twain. The authoress of the present book was also associated with Helen Keller, and throughout the book one feels strongly the devotion of Victoria Hugo to Helen in her attempts to delineate vignettes of Helen's wonderful character. The story of the 'Teacher', which was equally wonderful but had its tragic beginnings, is told in the succeeding chapters. Then come the description of Helen's voyage to Japan and how

she was honoured and adored by the Japanese, lay and the elite. All through her life she worked hard for the welfare of the blind and the deaf.

We also find glimpses of American life with all its frailties but with its deep concern for the disabled. The growth of the famous Perkins Institute for the blind is very interesting. The two lives, Helen's and the Teacher's, bring out by their contrast how character is formed in early childhood and how the society and the world at large are immensely benefited by taking loving care of children.

We wish the book were well edited to avoid some strange use of the language which sound unfamiliar to those who are well acquainted with English. All the same, it has to be recorded that the authoress deserves the gratitude of all lovers of humanity for bringing out this little book on a great personality in a simple language.

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Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Vidyapith
Mylapore, Madras

NEWS AND REPORTS

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION HOME OF SERVICE, VARANASI

REPORT FOR 1984-85

The Home was started in 1900 as an independent institution under the name 'Poor Man's Relief Association' by a few young men who were inspired by the teachings of Swami Vivekananda. These young men used to take care of the poor and the diseased, sometimes collected from the roadside. Swamiji was delighted to see their dedicated service and renamed the institution 'The Ramakrishna Home of Service'. It was affiliated to the Ramakrishna Mission in 1902. From this modest inception, the Home of Service has now grown into a fully equipped modern hospital serving the poor and the suffering as living manifestations of God.

The activities of the year are outlined below:

Indoor General Hospital: The total number of cases admitted during the year was 6,014; of these 2,806 were relieved, 1983 cured, 552 discharged otherwise, 498 died and 161 remained under treatment at the end of the year. Surgical cases totalled 3,053, intramuscular injections 57,013 and interarticular injections, aspirations and lumber punctures 45,869. The percentage of patients treated free was 34.83 and the average daily occupancy of beds was 146.

Outpatients' Department: The number of patients treated, including those treated at the branch at Shivala, was 2,10,446 (new cases: 53,008) and the daily average attendance was 683. There were 3,228 surgical cases and 5,466 intravenous and intramuscular injections.

Homoeopathy: The Homoeopathic sections at the Sevashrama campus at Luxa and at the Sivala branch attended by 7 homoeopths served 21,757 patients.

Clinical and Pathological Laboratory: 32,261 different tests were conducted in the laboratory during the year in the areas of clinical pathology, serology, chemical pathology, L.F.T. (Liver Function Tests) and bacteriology.

X-ray, electrotherapy and E.C.G. department: 4,884 X-ray exposures were taken during the year under report. 286 cardiac patients were helped by the ECG section and a considerable number of others by the electrotherapy section.

Invalids' Home: Two separate homes maintained 18 men and 32 women, the men being mostly old and retired monks of the Ramakrishna Order. The women were poor widows who have no one to look after them.

Outdoor relief to the poor: Monthiy pecuniary help amounting to Rs. 10,228.60 was given towards food, house-rent, school fees etc., to 47 persons. Besides, 70 dhotis and 91 blankets were distributed among the needy.

Immediate needs: 1. Funds for the maintenance of 200 beds in the hospital, 2. Endowments for beds: the cost of endowment for a single bed is Rs. 30,000 but Rs. 10,000 or Rs. 5,000 may also be given as partial endowments to perpetuate someone's memory, 3. Endowments for Invalids' Homes: Similar endowments are essential to maintain the old men and women in these two homes, 4. Donations to meet the accumulated deficit of Rs. 4,50,986.45, 5. Construction of residential quarters for the nursing and other staff: Rs. 5 lakh, 6. Construction of a bigger

cowshed and a fodder store-room for the Sevashrama dairy: Rs. 1.50.000.

Contributions, which are exempt from income tax may be sent to the Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Home of Service, Varanasi 211 010.

RAMAKRISHNA MATH AND RAMAKRISHNA MISSION, BOMBAY

REPORT: APRIL 1981-MARCH 1984

This branch centre of the Ramakrishna Order was started in a rented house in 1923 and was shifted to its own present building in 1926. Its activities during 1981-84 are outlined below:

Religious: Daily worship and prayer were conducted in the temple of Sri Ramakrishna. Ramnam sankirtan was conducted on Ekadashi days. There were two weekly religious classes in Hindi and English on Saturdays and Sundays respectively. Classes and lectures were delivered in other parts of the city and the State. Birth anniversaries of Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Sarada Devi and Swami Vivekananda and the usual annual festivals like Durga Puja and Christmas were celebrated. Recitation competitions, open to students of all schools in Bombay and its suburbs, were held in five languages and 140 prizes were given away among 1,174 participants in 1982. Corresponding nos. for 1984 were: 139 prizes among 895 students.

Educational and Cultural: The Mission had maintained a students' Home for college boys till 1982 when it was closed under a scheme of expansion of the hospital. The Shivananda Library had 27,993 books during 1984. The reading room received 89 periodicals and dailies. During 1981 a total no. of 33,400 books and periodicals were lent out. The corresponding numbers for 1982 and 1983 were 32,566 and 27,692 respectively.

In 1983 Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Youth Convention was organized in which 600 youths took part. About 15 young men met every Sunday to study the Works of Swami Vivekananda under the guidance of a swami.

Medical: The Mission runs a charitable outdoor dispensary and an indoor hospital with allopathic and homoeopathic sections. The allopathic section is equipped foı surgery, pathology, gynaecology, dentistry, E.N.T, opthalmology and radiology. A total nö. of 5,50,223 patients were treated during the period under review,

Relief: Besides collecting funds for various relief works organized by the Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math, the centre itself conducted Flood Relief at Konkan where it distributed clothes, utensils, building materials and fertilizers.

Rural Health and Welfare: The Mission has several welfare programmes for Sakwar, an Adivasi village 70 km away from Bombay. A team of medical and para-medical workers visits the village every Sunday when about 1000 sick people are treated. Medicines, vitamin tablets, protein food, biscuits etc. are distributed. People with serious ailments are helped to get admitted into hospitals in Bombay. Other service activities at Sakwar include: giving loans to villagers in cash and kind for the starting of small business, for cultivation of land, for construction of houses and community marriages etc; imparting traning in agriculture, horticulture, masonry etc; teaching tailoring to the boys and girls of village and surrounding areas through a vocational training school (opened in 1980); distributing clothing materials among villagers; maintaining a library in the village (since 1981); organizing religious and cultural activities; and imparting non-formal education to villagers.

Immediate needs: Generous people are requested to contribute liberally to enable the Mission to fulfil the following needs: (1) Additional facilities at the hospital both for inpatient and outpatient service and diagnostic facilities: Rs. 60 lakh, (2) Additional medical educational, hygienical facilities at Sakwar: Rs. 30 lakh, (3) Library development at Khar and Worli: Rs. 20 lakh.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION NEW DELHI

REPORT FOR 1984-85

Started on a humble scale in 1927, this branch centre of Ramakrishna Mission was established in its present premises in 1935. The activities during the year are outlined below:

Religious work: Daily worship and Bhajan were conducted in the temple of Sri Ramakrishna. There was Ramnam sankirtan on Ekadashi days. Regular discourses on scriptures and Ramcharitmanas (on Saturday evenings) were given in the Mission auditorium and also in different institutions in Delhi. Festivals like Gurupurnima, Kalipuja and Durgapuja were observed. Birth

anniversaries of Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother and Swami Vivekananda were celebrated as a part of which there was Narayanaseva, serving the poor in the leper colony. 215 inmates of the colony participated in the function organized for them and were served with food packets. Each adult lady received a sari. *Free Library and Reading Room*: During the year under review 610 books were added bringing the total to 32,001. Average number of books issued everyday was 307; average daily attendance 310. The reading room recieved 15 newspapers and 106 periodicals. The library has a separate section for children. *University Students' Section Library*: Opened in 1962 and maintained with the financial assistance of the University of Delhi, this section is meant for the students of that University alone. 116 boys and 119 girls were enrolled during the year. *Medical work*: *Free Tuberculosis Clinic at Karol Bagh*: The number of outdoor cases treated in the clinic during the year was 6,754 (new cases: 4,648). The Domiciliary Service unit maintained close liaison between patients and the institution, advised patients and their contacts on matters of isolation and disinfection, and brought the contacts to the clinic for necessary examination and advice. During the year 18,472 patients (not covered by the Central Government Health Scheme) received antibiotics, vitamins etc. 3,767 patients were administered free injections.

A medical diagnostic centre with a clinical and investigative wing was attending to the needs of the poor.

The Homoeopathic Dispensary in the Mission premises, working since 1929, served 12,686 patients (new cases: 3,497). *Charity and Relief*: During the year the centre helped flood affected families by giving monetary assistance and articles of personal need. Some school and college students also received financial help. During the riots following the assassination of prime minister Indira Gandhi the centre distributed articles worth Rs. 87,811 to the affected families.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION, BELUR MATH RELIEF WORK DURING JULY 86

Primary Relief:

Maharashtra Drought Relief: 343 kgs of food grains, 30 sets of utensils, 30 sarees, 34 dhotis and 29 bedsheets were distributed by our Bombay and Pune centres among drought stricken people in seven villages of Haveli Taluk, Pune district.

Karnataka Drought Relief: Besides maintaing the two already existing cattle camps at Tirumani and Vallur villages where the nnmber of cattle sheltered has reached 1,200 and 800 respectively, our Bangalore Ashrama has opened some more fodder distribution centres at Nogalamadika and other villages so as to cover additional 1,000 heads of cattle. 237.5 tonnes of dry grass and 1,500 kgs of rice bran have so far been distributed. Moreover, 2,000 kgs of Ragi and 2,000 kgs of Soji have been supplied to drought-stricken people and a deep bore-well has been sunk at Raicharlu village.

Sri Lanka Refugee Relief: Our Madras Mission Ashrama is continuing relief work among Sri Lanka refugees sheltered at Mandapam and Tiruchi camps.

Bangladesh Refugee Relief: Following a detailed survey conducted by our Agartala centre, arrangements are being made to air-lift clothes for distribution among the Chakmas from Bangladesh who have taken shelter in the refugee camps along Tripura border.

Tamil Nadu Fire Relief: Our Nattarampalli Centre has closed its fire relief work after distribution of 58 dhotis, 64 sarees, 58 towels, 54 blouses, 99 pieces of children's garments, 60 mats, 52 sets of aluminium utensils consisting of 6 items per set and 52 iron buckets among the victims of fire at Bandarapalli village in North Arcot district.

Rehabilitation:

Karnataka Fire Rehabilitation: Our Bangalore Ashrama is completing the construction of 20 houses for fire victims at Kottalam village (renamed as Ramakrishnapuram).

NOTES AND COMMENTS

The International Year of Peace

The UN has declared 1986 the International Year of Peace. Celebrations have so far been on a low key—understandably. For the world community has no illusions about them. In international vocabulary there is at present no word which is more vague and confusing than 'peace.' Without the aid of an official glossary, the word 'peace' might mean political shibboleth, international hypocrisy or even violence which is the very opposite of what peace normally means. Twenty-seven years ago in 1959 the UN General Assembly called for a general and complete disarmament but, with the exception of a few countries like Norway, Sweden and Canada, most of the countries have been preparing for wars, real or imaginary. The current year itself has witnessed several violations of peace in different parts of the globe.

And yet at no other time in the history of mankind has the world stood in greater need of peace than it does now. The horror of Hiroshima and Nagasaki pales into insignificance in comparison with the unutterable terror posed by modern weapon systems. There are more than fifty thousand nuclear warheads poised to wipe out the world several times over: equivalent to three tons of TNT for every man, woman and child. More destructive power is carried in a single nuclear submarine than was unleashed through the whole of the Second World War. Life, already unsafe on land, on water and in the air, is now threatened even from space. The Star Wars programme is in full swing.

Though the present world situation appears irremediable it is really not so. The master-key to world peace is held by the two Super Powers and, should they come together, or at least climb down from their hostile stances, there would be peace in the world. It is a pity that the U.S.A, so wealthy, so powerful, built upon such high ideals as are enunciated in the Declaration of Independence and the Monroe Doctrine, has been behaving like a maverick in international forums in recent years. Under the dire situation which the global community is now in, the U.S. could provide a mighty impulse to peace, and could act as a rallying point for all peace-loving democratic forces. Instead, that nation has given up even the none too credible talk of peace that the Soviet Union has been indulging in, and has opted for a brazenly aggressive policy. Since economy in several countries in the West, especially the U.S.A., is dependent heavily on the manufacture of arms, these nations have a vested interest in keeping up international belligerency.

When developing countries like India voice their concern for peace, it is not hypocrisy but an expression of a real fear. Their fear is not of annihilation but of the diversion of scant resources which they badly need for development and political stability. India's quest for peace has been made all the more difficult by the recent upsurge in terrorist and secessionist activities within the country. Yet as Mahatma Gandhi said, 'Not to believe in the possibility of permanent peace is to disbelieve in the godliness of human nature.'